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SNAP SHOTS FROM BOY LIFE

BY F. C. T. O'HARA

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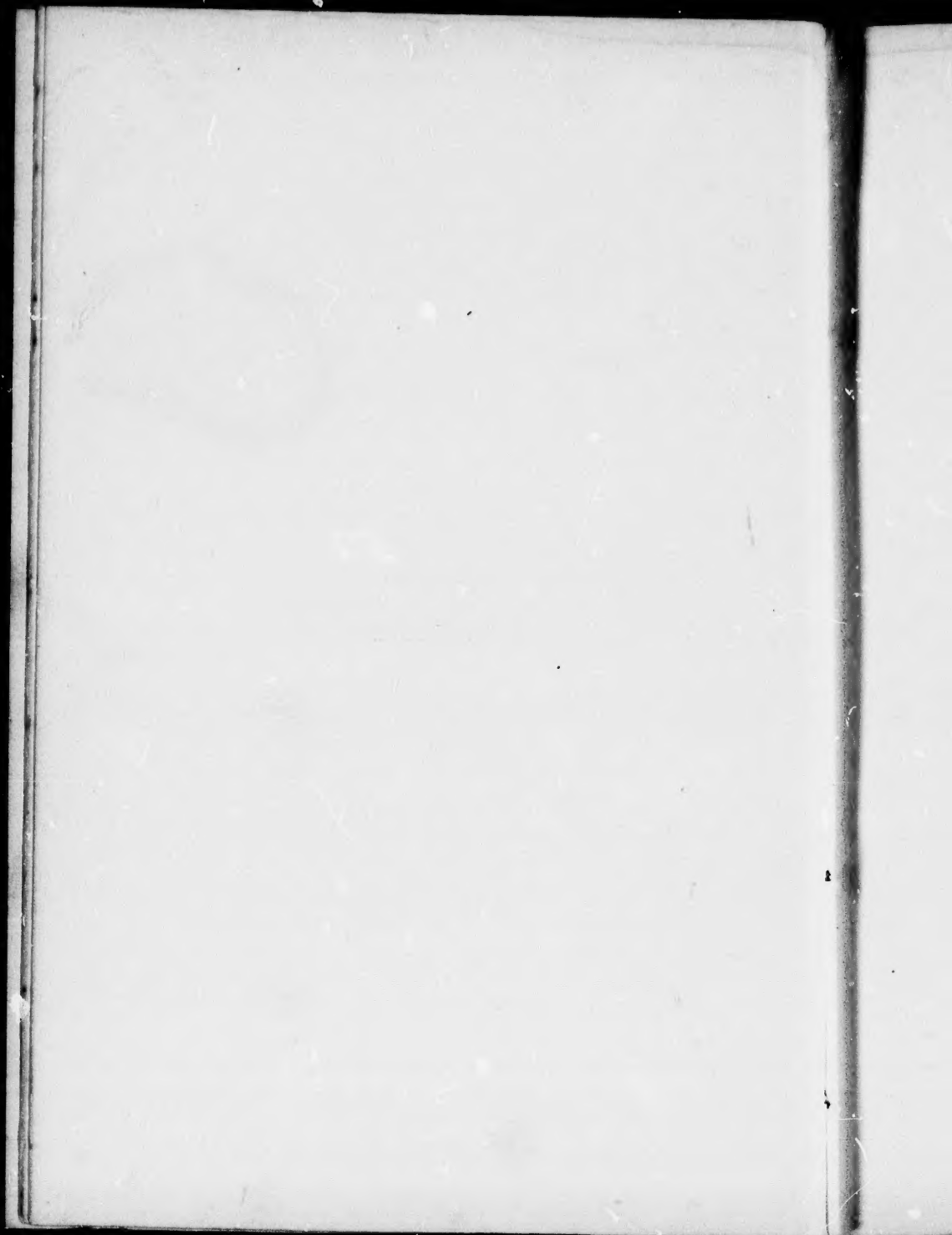
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Dedicated to
MY MOTHER.

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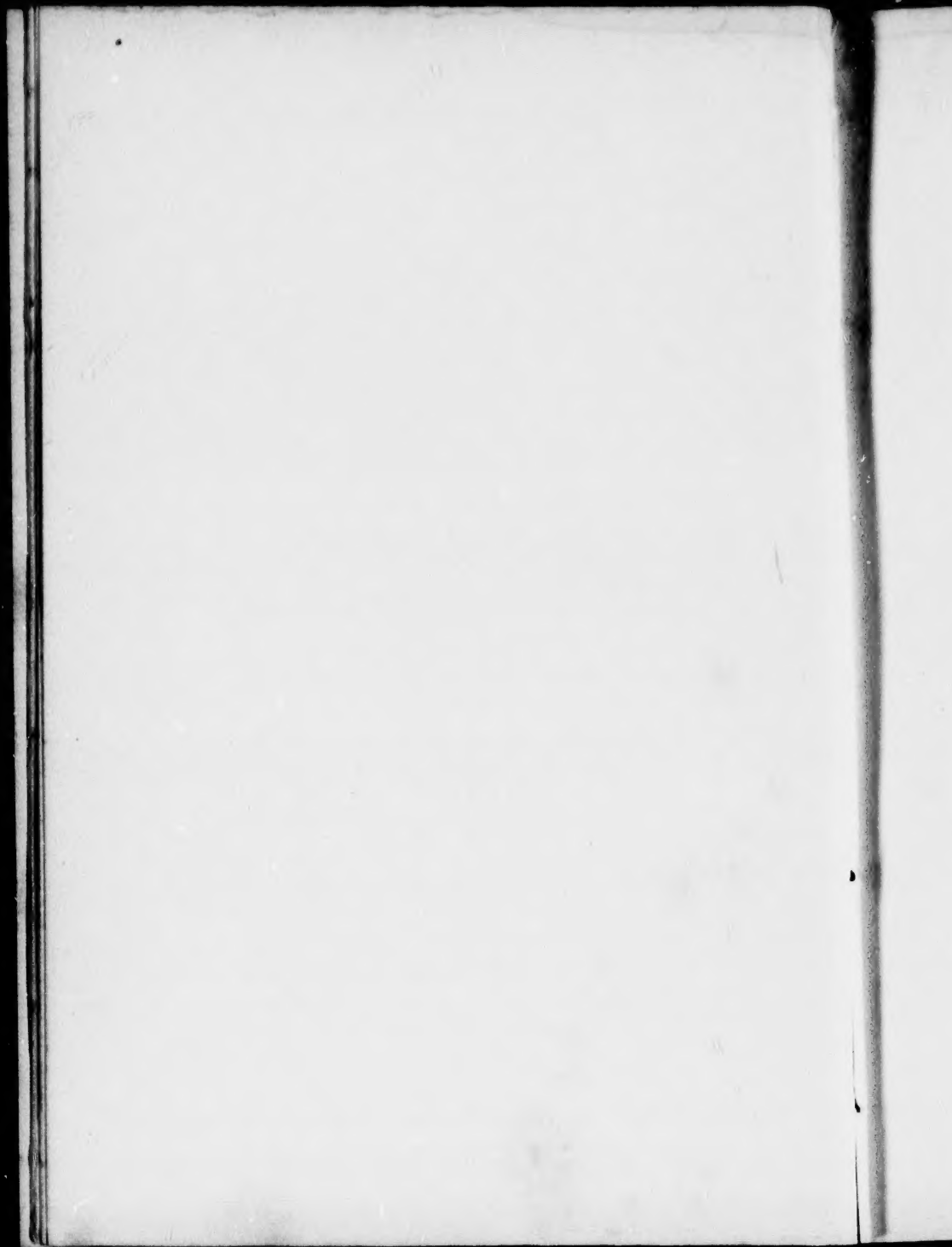


SONG OF BOOKS.



"Oh for a booke and a shadie nooke,
Eyther in doore or out;
With the grene leaves whispering overhead
Or the streete cryes all about.
Where I maie reade all at my ease,
Both of the newe and olde;
For a jollie goode booke whereon to looke,
Is better to me than golde."

—Old English Song.

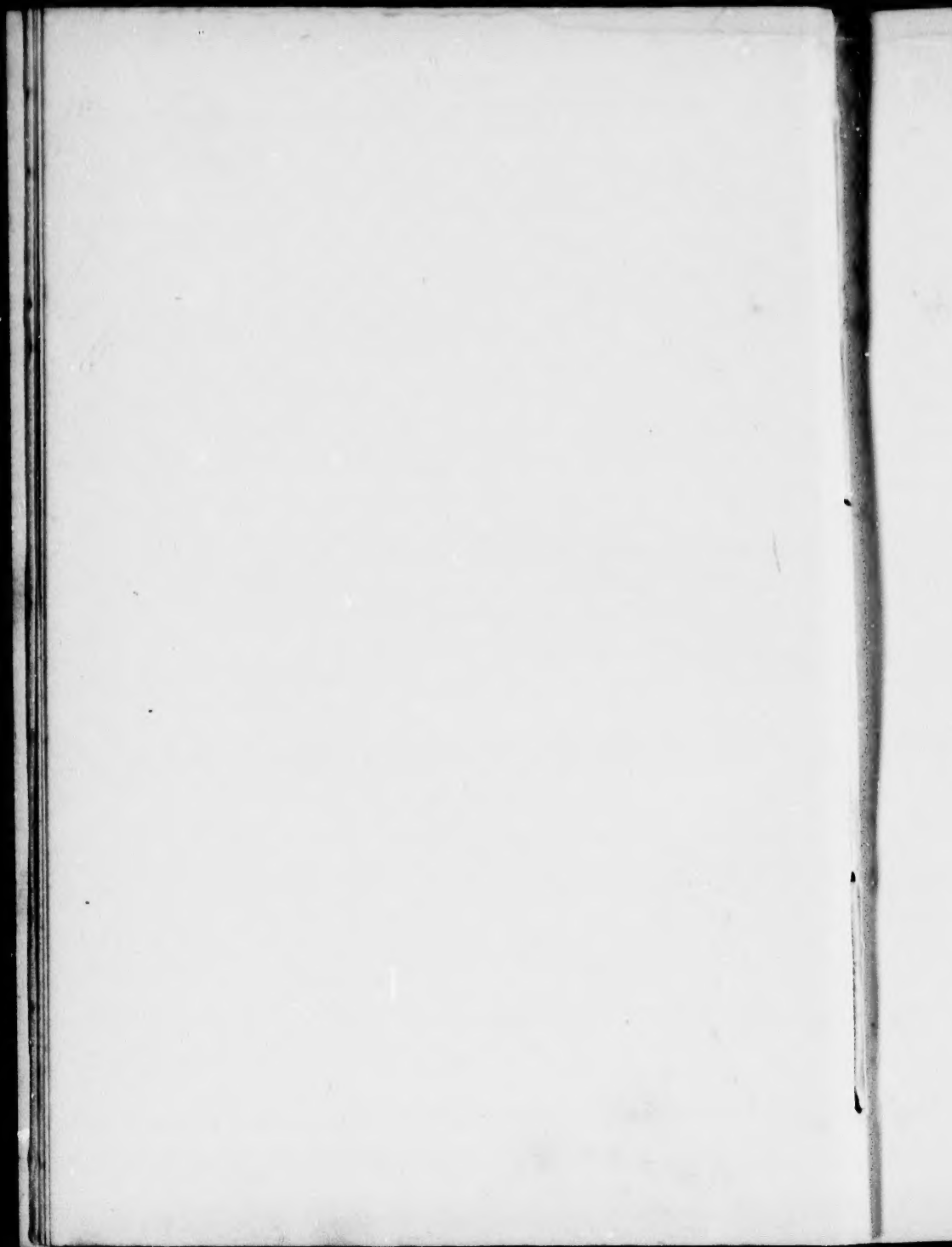


"Nay, dally not with time, the wise man's
treasure:

Though fools are lavish on't, the fatal Fisher
Hooks souls while we waste moments."

—Anon.

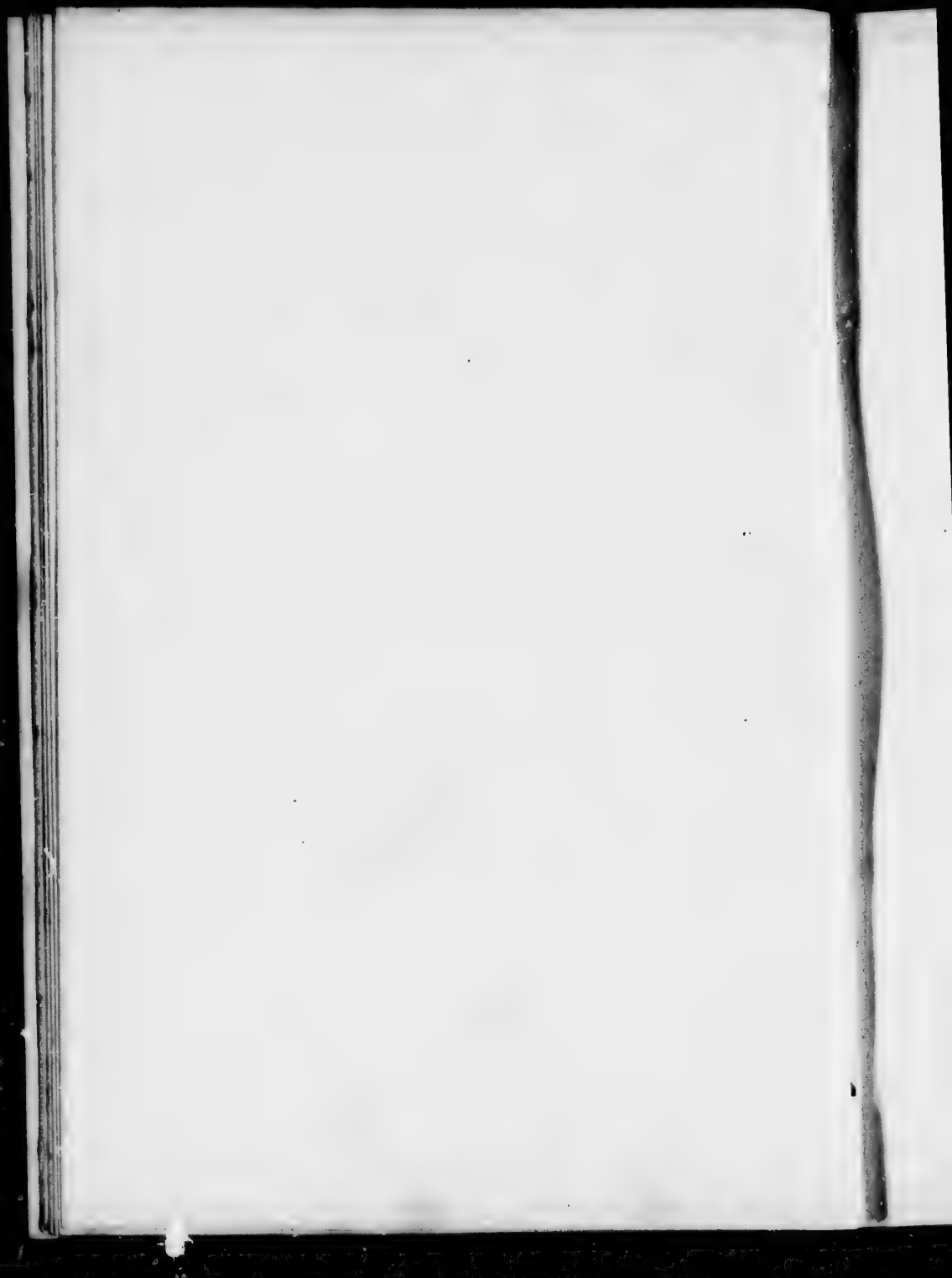




**"O gentlemen! the time of life is short;
To spend that shortness basely, were too
long."**

—Shakespeare.

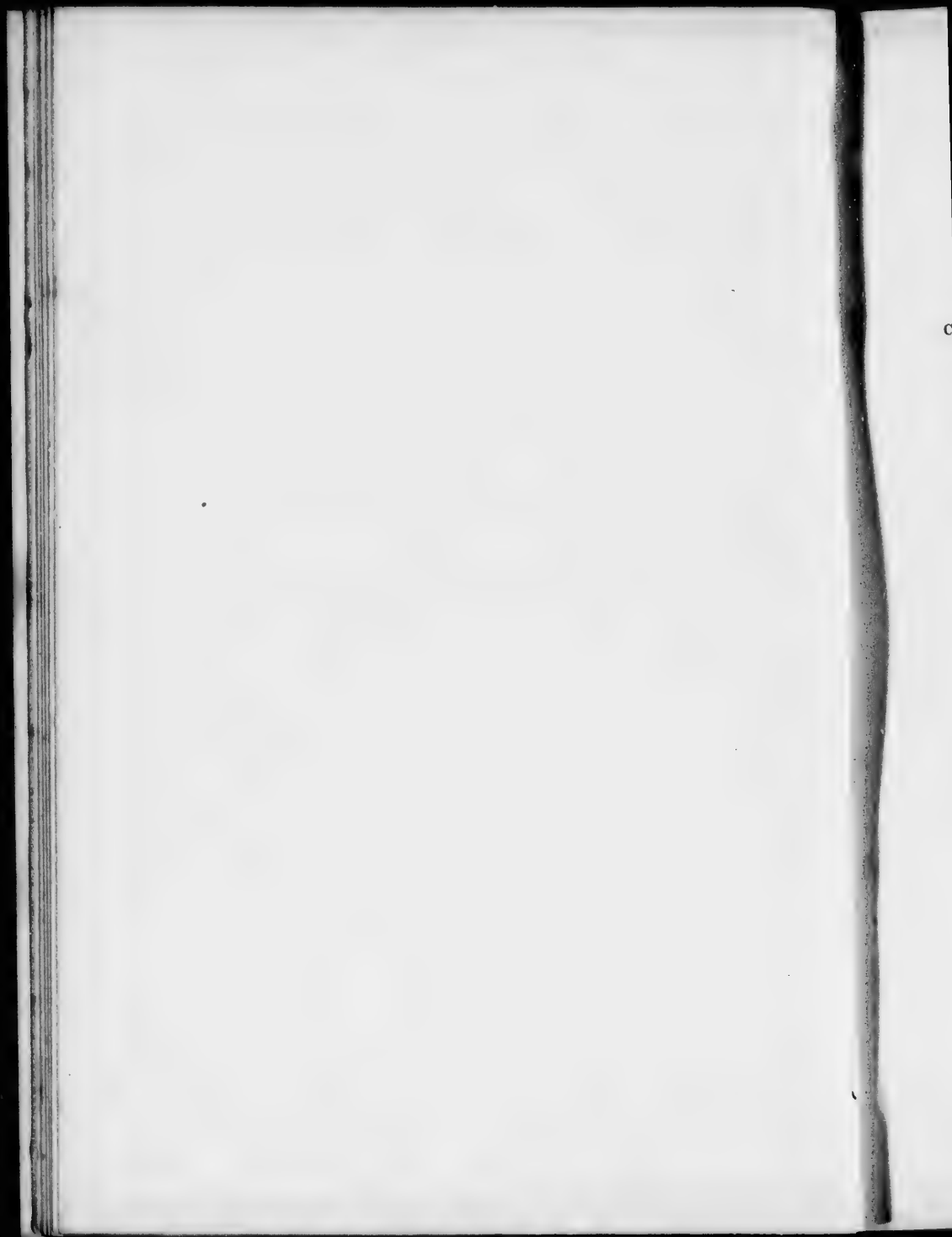




**"Beware of idleness—it is the greatest
enemy of the soul."**

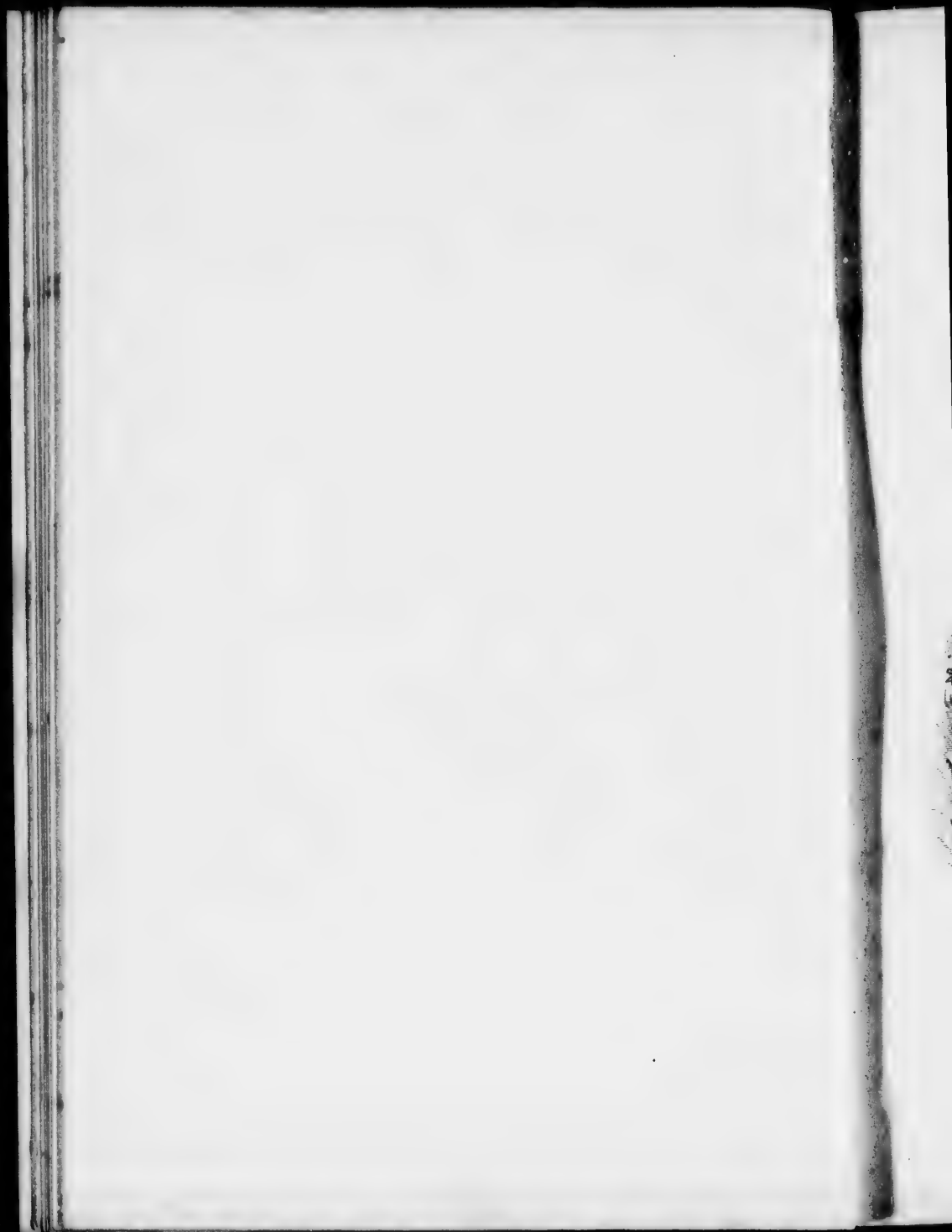
—St. Benedict.





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Snap Shots from Boy Life.

CHAPTER I.

Being a Boy.



BOYS do not seem to appreciate that they are boys. They do not seem to prize that happy-go-lucky age when they have nothing to do but tumble out of bed in the morning, get ready for school, spend the day as best they can, study a few lessons, always ready to eat or idle, worry the cat, and tease any

brother or sister who happens to be so unfortunate as to be younger than they.

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Such is the daily routine of the average boy, and when he is asked to pile some wood or bring in a scuttle of coal he grumbles about it, and wonders if he is not breaking down from overwork. He goes and looks at himself in the glass, and feels sorry that there is not even the slightest perceptible wan expression about his dirty face. His life is, indeed, a hard one—so hard that he wishes he might skip the period of being a boy and be a man at once.

It is just at this age that he looks forward to the day when he can strut down the street with long trousers, dreading at the same time that awful "guying" which is so repugnant to the usual boy, and which falls to the lot of that individual who, from sheer force of circumstances, has occasionally to put on a new garment.

He thinks of the morning when he has to go to school, when every other boy will take a particular interest in him for a few days. He has to tell almost a countless number of boys that "there was no fire," nor did he have to "put sugar on his boots to coax his 'pants' down." I put that word "pants" in quotation marks because I am ashamed to use it in any other way. It is a word that should be abhorred—just the same as the word "gents."

Being a Boy.

Richard Grant White, an excellent authority on the correct usages of English, sneers at both, and shows his disgust by saying "pants" are always worn by "gents." They always go together, and you may know that a "gent" as a rule is a very vulgar fellow.

But I must get back to that happy-go-lucky chap. The boy knows that the others will soon become accustomed to seeing him wear long trousers, and he feels a pleasure in anticipating a wet day when he can roll them up at the bottom. Then very likely he soon grows tired of them and wishes they were short again, especially when he goes roaming through the woods, and takes off his shoes and stockings to wade in boggy lands or in some cooling woodland stream. The boy with short trousers seems to be more of a boy than he who wears the coveted extensions; he appears to better advantage.

In the summer-time in the country it is a happy sight to see a boy toggled out in nothing except shirt, breeches and hat, with probably the addition of a smile. He is one of the most light-hearted of creatures. I will go still further and say he is even a still happier type of boy if he only has one brace with which to hold up his pantaloons, and that doing

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service by means of an ingeniously bent pin or piece of wood. He is kept in mind of his faulty dress by its constantly being in need of attention. A "sailor's hitch" is necessary at times to keep things in their proper place.

But, of course, it is the country lad who exercises such perfect freedom in his attire, and he is the more happy for it in the pursuit of those many innocent pastimes which serve to make days pass swiftly for the boy reared on the farm or in the hamlet.

How a boy does like to dabble in the dirt or make mud pies! Indeed, I have very tender recollections of the same amusement, when a little golden-haired girl was my able assistant many years ago. We made mud pies and sailed boats in the flooded drains together. But speaking of the boy again, I can imagine I see him—one of those rural chaps—with hands thrust deep in his pockets, and with his hat upon the back of his head, walking down a dusty road in the month of August, whistling like a steam engine, while kicking up clouds of dust on both sides. He is at peace with the whole world. He hasn't a cent in his pocket, nor has he had one for a good many days, yet he is as happy as the bird, at which he has just thrown a stone, upon the fence.

Being a Boy.

He may have intended to hit the little feathered creature, but he never expected for a moment he could throw straight enough for that. Of course he misses it. I do not think he would have tried to hit it if he had stopped to think that he might have sent the little thing flying off to its nest with a broken leg.

But boys generally are cruel. They do not, however, fully comprehend that dumb animals have feelings, or else they would not always be so ready to pitch a stone at every living creature that chances to come across their path.

I remember when I was on a ramble through the bush, seeing a little bird on a branch a few yards away, and having a stone in my hand, I threw it with scarcely a thought. Accidentally I hit the bird and it fell dead. I was indeed deeply sorry for the hasty action, and showed my grief by tenderly placing the warm, soft little bunch of feathers in a tiny grave under the fatal tree, and then put up a rough stick as a monument. Some years after I went back, feeling strangely sad, but the tree was gone and the surrounding spot so changed that it was unrecognizable.

What a fund of enjoyment these excursions in the

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bush afford a boy! There is something weird and fantastic that appeals to the imagination of a boy. It is a new world to him. To suggest a trip with his elder brother to the woods to chase chipmunks brings a startling change over the boy's movements, and he becomes an irrepressible bunch of activity. He would rather forego his dinner than miss it; he would chop wood all morning and bring in enough coal to last for three weeks. There would not be a more obliging person about the house, and he would actually condescend to promise to make a whistle for the youngster, whom, out of hearing of the family, he dubs "the kid."

But boys are all the same in their love for the woods, and I remember well when I would sit in school waiting for the closing hour and answer with a peculiar signal another boy across the room who wanted me to go for a swim "out to the gully." He would hold up his first and second finger, held wide apart, and look through them with one eye. That meant "Will you come out to the gully after school for a swim?" and the "gully" was away out near a thicket where we used to go in the fall to cut "shinneys" for the winter.

But that old gully was the dirtiest place a boy

Being a Boy.

could possibly find in which to bathe. I never thought so then, although we used to sink up to our ankles in mud and think of snakes. We used to hear the bull-frogs croaking, and think they were the long and slimy "black-snakes" with plenty of rattles and poisoned fangs. It, of course, is natural to dislike snakes, and every boy thinks it his duty to kill every snake that he sees. No matter how we might mutilate it, we always believed that it would not die until the sun went down. Such are the superstitions of boyhood.

Speaking of superstition, there was a boy whom we always considered an authority upon Indians, and we sincerely believed him when he said all the mounds in the woods were Indian graves. It always gave us very romantic ideas, and strange to say, it never occurred to us that they were decaying trunks of trees which had fallen probably many years before. However, we believed what we were told, and it now serves to keep green memories of those happy days long ago. It is these incidents of childhood which bring to an old man's mind sad but sweet moments of pleasure in the contemplation of his boyish days.

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CHAPTER II.

Value of Reading.



BOYS, I would ask you one very important question. Do you read much? or, do you look upon reading as you would upon an allotted task of hoeing an immense field of corn on a hot summer's day, instead of going to the circus, or perhaps fishing? There are too many of you who think reading an intolerable nuisance, serving only to make school life miserable—too many anticipating with pleasure the time when they will be enabled to lay aside the odious books, perhaps forever.

Many of my readers have probably thought this long ago; and now, when they turn back the pages of the past, they feel that their school-days were the

Value of Reading.

happiest of their lives. They bitterly regret that they did not avail themselves of opportunities now lost forever. How many of you ever thought that your education begins when you leave school? It is true, nevertheless. At school your minds are trained in the way they should go, and it is in after life that a man who properly makes use of this foundation succeeds in the struggle for fame.

Are you aware that the world's greatest scholars have been those who considered their training at school as a preparation for the severer intellectual effort of later years, and who never would have become famous had they not supposed so?

Many of you think that reading never ceases to be an exertion. That is a serious mistake. Not only does the habit of reading grow upon you, but you acquire by it a desire for books which cannot be quenched, and the longing for higher thoughts grows upon you until you reach that plane where intellectual giants afford inexhaustible supplies of learning. It is then that you become familiar with the noblest efforts of the human intellect.

But to return to the first question. Many of you will have to acknowledge that you never read. Others are glad to answer that they do read a great

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deal. Ah! but what *kind* of reading? Generally speaking, there are only two kinds of books—the good and the bad. You certainly can tell them apart, and for one you have formed a preference.

I would far rather see a boy read very little, if he read good books, than fill his head full of those trashy sensational stories which so many of you read too often. If you have formed a liking for these, nothing can prevent a total degradation and a depraved and perverted taste, which leads from bad to worse, and sometimes to actions too shocking to contemplate. It is just as easy to commence reading good books as bad ones. It may mean at first a little effort on your part to do this, and for those who have been reading wild western detective tales, it may involve a struggle to avoid such humiliating literature.

Now, there are many excellent books which would be quite as interesting to boys as the rubbish I refer to, and which, imparting, as they often do, a knowledge of the manners and customs of all the different nations of the earth, are at once instructive and amusing. Many of the authors of these books write in a classical style which you unconsciously acquire, and thus in time, although your early advantages

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have not been very great, you will be able to talk and write with ease and propriety.

I have seen many a boy, while at work, holding a "blood and thunder" novel in his hands, which he would eagerly read at every opportunity. All these books are ground out, as it were, from a press where heroines, revolvers, villains and heroes are thrown in together, with a mixture of bad English, slang and profanity. They pour out of the press in the form of five and ten cent novels, and these are the books by which so many young minds are becoming contaminated and polluted.

If you, in your spare moments, read good books, you will only be treading a pathway already smooth with the footsteps of great men who were brought up in poverty. David Livingstone was one of these. He, as a factory boy in Scotland, found at intervals a few minutes to read during his daily toil, and he left a name as one of the greatest of African explorers. In our own country examples are numerous; and there are many among us who, by diligent search on the great high-road of life which was pointed out to them at school, have raised themselves above their fellowmen, and whose history it will be the pleasure of posterity to recall.

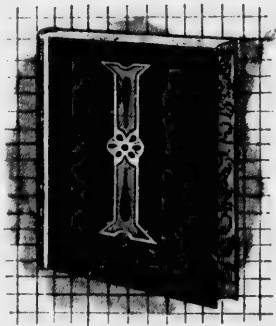
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Some of you may ask what books to read. This depends greatly upon your capabilities. There are hundreds of books which I could readily name which would satisfy you of the truth of what I have said. You may have the idea that historical reading is, as you say, "too dry." If this be the case with you, do not forget the hundreds of historical novels which would teach you more about past events than a whole shelf of histories. I do not mean to deprecate histories—far from it—but many novels so clothe great events that they become interesting, instructive and valuable knowledge.



CHAPTER III.

Choosing Books and How to Read Them.



HAD a talk with you in the last chapter on the importance of reading. I tried to impress upon you the advantages in life that one derives who keeps up his reading, even though he has

left school and taken up some business where books do not seem to be required. There is not much doubt but that you were aware that all that was said was true, yet you do not know *where* and *how* to commence in order to read with the best results. *What* books to read and *how* to read them are two important considerations. I will say at once that the enormous number of books which fill our libra-

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ries makes it difficult to answer the first question. Your age and advancement in education have also to be considered.

But first and most important of all is the Bible. That book stands alone as a masterpiece of English, apart from its divine inspiration. It has thundered down through the ages a message to man from God; it has been studied by all scholars of every creed; it has gained its place above all books, not only as the most sacred of works, but in it are found passages which appeal to every feeling of the human heart. The Bible in itself is a library.

But to continue to another style of books, I would advise you, if a boy ten or twelve years of age, to read such works as "The Arabian Nights," "Robinson Crusoe," or "With Livingstone in Africa." The first leads your imagination into Persia and other eastern countries. It tells you of the people and their manners and customs. The second is a book which, like the others, every boy should read. Full of exciting adventures, it is told in a language which is remarkable for its simplicity, and forms your taste for a good class of literature. The last book mentioned takes you into the heart of Africa, with one of the greatest of modern explorers. You there get

Choosing Books.

an idea of "The Dark Continent," which increases your knowledge of the world, and the narrative at the same time gives you unbounded pleasure.

There are many simply written stories in which you will take as much interest as in those which have been referred to. There are some attractive works by G. A. Henty. "With Wolfe in Canada" tells you of one of the most interesting periods in Canadian history, and pictures in splendid language the deeds of valor performed by one of England's greatest heroes. In his "Franc-Tireurs" there is an excellent and interesting account of the Franco-Prussian War. In his "With Clive in India" you acquire a knowledge of the vast extent of that country, and of the people and their customs. W. H. G. Kingston's publications make valuable additions to a boy's library, embracing, as they do, exciting tales of sea life incident to many great naval battles. R. M. Ballantyne and Landor have also written stories of which all boys are fond.

In the pages of Captain Marryat, Mayne Reid and Jules Verne any boy will find much that is interesting, and gain at the same time a good taste and style in the usage of forcible English. I suppose, of course, that you have already a fair knowledge of the history

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of your own country and people, and it is highly desirable that you should acquire a knowledge of the manners, customs and pursuits in life of the inhabitants of other regions.

It would be well as your desire to read increases, if you would read Scott's novels, Dickens' "David Copperfield," Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," Macaulay's "Essays," and also those of Addison and Emerson. If you are fond of history read Dickens' "Child's History of England," Hume's "History of England," Carlyle's "French Revolution," Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Bancroft's "History of the Colonization of the United States." Motley's "Rise and Fall of the Dutch Republic" is intensely interesting, although from its title you might think it too far above you. Then, again, you should read Shakespeare whenever you get the opportunity, and do not omit the poets—Milton, Byron, Longfellow, Tennyson and a host of others. Some of our own writers in Canada should not be forgotten—Roberts, Thomson, Oxley, McDougall; and the beautiful book of poems of the Indian princess, Pauline Johnson, should find its way into your library. You might also read Lytton's "Last Days of Pompeii," Kings-

Choosing Books.

ley's "Westward Ho," and Thackeray's "Vanity Fair." Read even one-half of these carefully, and you will never find difficulty in deciding a course in reading for yourself.

The books which have been mentioned are only a few of those which you can find in the libraries. Many of them are simple and easily understood. They form a common threshold, as it were, for you as well as men with developed intellects. Many of them are essential to the higher paths of literature. If you follow this path the time will soon arrive when you will feel that you must read books which demand the exercise of your own thought—books which, in the end, form your character and influence the tenor of your future life.

Now, the second step after determining *what books to read*, is *how to read them*. A great many people will glance over the pages hurriedly, only enabling them, if it be a novel, to follow the plot of the story, to be forgotten next day. If you are reading some standard book, I can offer you no better suggestion than to bestow upon it your concentrated attention. In fact, that is the only way to read with the best results.

If you are not inclined to read at one time, put

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the book away until you are. But always read it most carefully, even though it be only for a few minutes each day. Afterwards think over what you have read. When you do this you are educating yourself. You acquire unknowingly the use of good English, and at the same time become familiar with words and their spelling. Never pass over a word when you do not know its meaning. It may seem a little trouble to you, but a good suggestion is that you keep a dictionary beside you and write each word down with its meaning, and keep the list. You will be surprised what a help it will be to you. If an author uses a word you do not know the meaning of, nine chances out of ten he is going to use it again. When you do meet with the word again, you will feel a pleasure in not having to again refer to the dictionary.

When you have read a book you should be able to tell something about it. One of the most excellent ways to cultivate your memory is to talk about what you have read with some boy who is as fond of reading as yourself, and although at first you may not remember much about it, if you continue to do this, you will astonish yourself with your wonderful progress.

Choosing Books.

It is often told of Macaulay, one of England's most brilliant historians, that he would read a paragraph, and then repeat in his own words what it contained. He would then take a page, and then a chapter, and at last, it is said, he could repeat almost word for word the contents of the whole book. His wonderful memory served him all through his great career, and added much to his abilities as a writer.

The memory is a faculty which may be cultivated to an extraordinary degree. Numbers, and particularly difficult and uncommon names of persons and things, may be impressed so forcibly that they are never forgotten. This may be effected by a system known as mnemonics, and in practice it is the association of the name or number that you want to remember with some visible object, or with some image or idea—the more absurd and ludicrous the association the better will the word be remembered.

To give an example: I was once told to associate the botanical name of a common North American plant known as the "poke weed," with boys fighting. The juice of the berry is the color of blood, which suggests fighting, and having the first syllable "fight," the remaining syllables are readily remembered. The name is *phytolacca* (*fito-lacca*). This was told me

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many years ago, and I never have forgotten the difficult name which otherwise never would have been remembered.

But I shall say no more on memory at present, as that subject will be dealt with more fully in a future chapter. In conclusion, all that is asked of you is to read good books, and read them carefully. Do not try to get over them rapidly, but read thoughtfully and leisurely. One book read in this way is of more value to you than a score of books which you have read in haste.



CHAPTER IV.

Trashy Reading.



IN the chapter on the value of reading, two great classes of literature were referred to, the good and the bad ; but now there is another class which it is necessary to say something about—that is, light reading. By light reading we mean those books, papers or periodicals which only amuse and enable you to “kill time,” or at least “while” it away, but leave little or no lasting impression on the mind.

This mania for light reading has gradually been on the increase for many years, and no one supposes it will ever be checked. We not only confine ourselves more than formerly to light reading, but we

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read still more "by snatches." This great fault can be ascribed to nothing else than the age in which we live, for there never was a time when such quantities of every kind of literature were coming from the printing-press as to-day. The cheapness, also, of these publications places before us almost any class of literature which we may desire.

There are comparatively very few families who do not take some weekly or monthly paper, and many take several of each. Without saying anything about these light journals or magazines, it is worth cautioning you against this light and fragmentary reading. One of the greatest evils resulting from it is to decrease the power of memory.

For instance, you take up a periodical and hurriedly read some light, disconnected sketches, which, of course, require no thought to comprehend. The impression you receive is light, and you soon forget it. You do not try to remember what you have read, and it would not do you much good if you did; but by this means you "while" away valuable hours. The more you read fragments the more you will be inclined to, and in time you will not have the patience to read through any work of a more solid and instructive nature. Of course, what you find in

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the standard monthly magazines is generally well worth reading.

I am not an enemy of light reading, for it has its place, and a small share of our time can very properly be given up to it ; but to give up all of our time to this class of literature is a lamentable mistake.

There are many people who can mention, not only all of what are called the first-class novels of this kind, but many of those light novels which have only attained a second-class prominence. They think themselves very wise with such information, and suggest to you certain books which they liked, and probably make fun of your ignorance of the existence of them. It is just as well for you that you are ignorant of them, and had you a fair amount of the average man's vengeful spirit in you, you might parry their jests by inquiring what they know of the imperishable Shakespeare, of Macaulay, Emerson, Gibbon or Milton, of any of the poets, or any other great writer.

Second thought tells me you might as well put these questions to a brick wall, as to those who pride themselves on the number of light novels they read during the year. You might receive an echo from the first, but so much cannot be said for the last.

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When one finishes reading a book or scrap of this kind, what has he or she to show for the time which has been devoted to it? Nothing! Nothing more than the thought that the time passed pleasantly. What a profitless existence! They simply allow, as it were, the hollowness of the book to resound on a brain which slowly becomes as empty of all good moral and useful ideas as the book itself. It is hard to call this depravity of taste, as that term is generally applied to reading books of a much lower class, yet in the end such reading leads one to that unfortunate condition.

As said before, light reading is all very well in its place—say, after some hard study, or after reading some standard book which demanded your thoughts. Could anything be more plain to you than the fact that a good book which requires you to think, will in time develop your intellect, while one of these light works will only use your brain as a sounding board, to give a little temporary pleasure and not the slightest particle of profit?

You will grant me that people must either advance or recede in the power of their intellect, for it is impossible to remain in the same place. Then if they do not go forward, they certainly will incline

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toward a state of mental corruption. If there were no books within everyone's reach from the higher planes of thought there might be some excuse, but to-day good literature is pouring from the press which, for cheapness, is a wonder of the age. He must be very poor, indeed, who cannot have a library adorned with the works of the greatest authors. Again, with our free libraries, we have access to books which money can hardly reproduce, such rare treasures as they are.

What delight it affords us to collect a library in which we can take pride in knowing it contains nothing but standard writers! It is indeed a pleasure too dear for utterance, as one volume after another adds to the scanty shelves. One should be more careful about the choice of his books than anything else, with the possible exception of friends. They are, indeed, to some people, their greatest companions, and to us all, in a way, greater than friends—they never profess friendship and prove false. Happy is the young man who makes a wise selection.

Young men are usually fond of history and biography. No better taste could be cultivated from which to enter every path of literature. In biography we learn much of the man whose works we

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read. We see what prompted his ideas, and know him far better than we ever would were we not to read his life. What the average young man knows of the lives of great men is comparatively little.

For instance, there are many of my readers who could not tell me where Napoleon was born. Where did Byron die? Who was Macchiavelli? How did the poet Shelley meet his death? Who were the following: Warren Hastings, Garibaldi, Schiller, Sir Walter Scott, Plato, Demosthenes?—and many other such simple questions bearing on the lives of great men whose names will be on the pages of history forever.

Do not think lightly of what has been said, but cultivate a taste for good reading; then see what a pleasure it will be to watch your little library grow with the works of men whose names can never die, and among whom, speaking through their books, you can pass your happiest hours.



Cultivating the Memory.

CHAPTER V.

Cultivating the Memory.



HOW often have you heard somebody say, "I haven't any memory at all," or "I can't remember anything"? Frequently, of course. But did you ever stop a moment and think that if that were literally true such a one would be a fit person for an asylum? A person that had no memory whatever would not be able to recognize himself in a mirror. He would never know anybody, not even his parents.

Without memory life would be a blank. Memory is the most important function of the brain, and therefore the most useful to us if we cultivate it. When a person says he "cannot remember anything," he forgets that what he does remember is an incred-

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ibly large amount. In ordinary conversation we must remember what each word means. If we had no memory we should not only forget the meaning of the words, but should forget the first part of a sentence before we heard the last part. In fact, our mother-tongue would be as unintelligible to us as Japanese.

To have a good memory is the desire of everyone, but it seems strange that such an important advantage as this would be does not tempt many to cultivate it. It is the easiest faculty to improve. Now, to do this requires a little exertion, but in time the exertion becomes a habit, and you practise it without thinking. In the first place, you should remember that the essence of memory is the concentration of the attention ; that is, you should carefully observe or pay attention to any subject which you have in hand. This makes the impression sufficiently strong to be recalled at a future time. If you do not do this, the impression is so light that it soon leaves you forever.

This quality of concentration is possessed by all our faculties ; the school-boy takes a great interest in base-ball when he troubles little about his Latin. The musician listens intently to some music when he

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would go to sleep over a sermon. The cattle dealer looks intently at some cows, which he sees browsing in a field, when he would pass by the latest masterpiece of the painter's art. The athlete will not always take much interest in studying Syriac, but put two foot-ball teams in the field and then watch him. Examples might be given without number.

From this we see that it requires no exertion to give our whole attention to anything which interests us. The difficulty is with those things which least interest us. But to have a good memory we must have a power of concentration for everything which will be of use to us, whether we take an interest in it or not. This is of the utmost importance. Work can never be done efficiently if the student does not devote the whole of his attention to the subject.

If you have anything to learn, much depends upon the first impression that you receive. If you take great care and thoroughly understand the main points you will have little difficulty in remembering the details. By frequently bringing to mind that which you have learned you will receive such an impression as to make it indelible. It is this that enables the dull scholar to compete successfully with his more brilliant fellow-student.

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One of the greatest aids in learning anything—say, some poetry—is to write it down directly you rise in the morning. You would then see what you knew and what you had forgotten. Were you to pick up the book and commence studying it without doing this, you would not know how much of it you had learned.

There are many who are rapid learners. They can read over a lesson and then repeat it almost at once. But how often are they beaten at the end of the session by the youth who has taken great pains and trouble in studying. This gives rise to the fact that what is gained with great trouble is not easily lost, and what is learned with little trouble is soon forgotten.

Frequently a person can rapidly learn some poetry and repeat it next morning, but if he thinks no more of it for a week he will have forgotten it. One should never allow his mind to grow tired. Most students have often noticed that when they almost fall asleep over one study, if they change to another they wake up. It is impossible to remember a thing long when your mind is tired, yet you continue to force it to work. It is best for this that you study only

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when inclined, and when this is the case do not leave off on any account.

Studying in this able condition is very satisfactory, and the work produced is of far better quality than at any other time. Let anyone compare two pieces of his composition, one composed when he was tired and disinclined for mental exertion, and one written very rapidly, his thoughts coming more quickly than he was able to write them. The first would hardly bear comparison with the last.

No good work is ever derived from forcing the brain to work when it asks for rest, nor can anything be long remembered. It is not the number of hours which the student devotes to his books that makes him grow in knowledge, but the way in which he studies; it is what he knows and remembers. Steady application and perseverance is one of our finest qualities.

But it can be overdone. Some students seem to think of nothing but "work, work, work," scarcely ever taking any recreation. What is the result? They become physically broken down while some other student has advanced himself just as much, but has, by proper changes, retained his bodily and mental strength. After all, however, there is

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nothing which can more surely give one a good memory than the habit of looking closely at everything, concentrating the mind and paying attention with all the faculties alert in every-day life and conversation.

Do this and the impressions will remain with you.
This is memory.



CHAPTER VI.

How to Study.



YOUNG had once wrote to me when I was writing letters such as these for a weekly paper, saying : " I have read your 'talks' on reading, studying and thinking, and as I am a school-boy they have interested me very much ; but I want to ask you how it is that at times I can learn much more rapidly than at others. I have tried to apply myself to the lessons, but many times I cannot do it. It seems to me that unless I am in the mood for studying, I may as well give up and put my books away for the time being. What is the best way of studying ?"

I do not think I am wrong when I take it for granted that you, gentle reader, have, at times, had

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such thoughts as these. Now, let me suppose that you wrote the letter and that the answer was written purposely for you. I should like to talk to each individually, but that is at present impossible ; so I shall address myself to *you*.

You ask for the best mode of studying. My boy, do you remember the answer made by a tutor to one of the kings of England, who as a boy rebelled against study, and asked how he could learn his lessons quickly. The tutor replied, "There is no royal road to learning." Remember this, and it will help you when you think that the greatest men that ever lived at one time in their lives did not know as much as you do now.

Let me say first, however, that health is necessary to obtain the best results in studying. Let a boy be sickly, and it is impossible for him to apply himself. I will speak of boys in general, and take it for granted that you are gifted with that general good health which is to be found among school-boys. The difficulty in not being able to learn your lessons with as great ease at one time as another lies in your lack of power to concentrate the mental faculties. There are times when something else has much interested you, and you could not get it out of mind. How can you,

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then, concentrate the attention on your studies ? It is very hard to do, yet it can be done.

You should train the mind to do your bidding.

This power of concentration can be cultivated to a wonderful extent. To study or think with force is an accomplishment of which few can boast, yet the power can be attained when sought for by proper methods. Many lose much time and grow discouraged simply because they are ignorant of the correct way of studying. When this is the case, you take no interest in your work, and in time dislike it.

Like everything else, study must be made interesting to you. Ruskin, that peerless writer of English, says :

“ When one gets to love his work his life is a happy one.”

It is just as true with respect to studying—it can be made a pleasure.

Another writer says, in speaking of thinking : “ It is desirable to spend an hour or so occasionally in thinking, to accustom one's self to severe thought, to get into the habit of concentrating the attention on a subject without either volume or pen in hand. This method may appear very easy, but if you try it,

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you will soon see how difficult it is, and at the same time perceive the advantage of adopting it.

Many people seem to go through life in a sort of sleepy condition and treat everything with indifference. On the other hand, we see people who always observe anything and everything new, and if you speak to them they listen with marked and concentrated attention.

David Pryde was one of these. He says : " If you wish to imagine accurately and vividly, you must observe accurately and vividly." This all has a bearing on study. While you are acquiring and practising this habit, you are unconsciously improving your mind. In the same way, when reading you should put out all your strength, and try and grasp every idea which the author expresses. This will mould your own intellectual powers, and form in you your own ideas. This is the true way of studying.

One should remember not to fall into a fault which is too common, and one which many of us commit even though we try to avoid it, and of this fault Emerson says : " A man dismisses without notice his thoughts, because they are his. He should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes

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across his mind from within more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages."

Everyone should try to get out of beaten paths. Hew a path for yourself, and if any thought impresses itself upon you, "out with it." Do not think it worthless because it is yours. This shows your individuality—a feature of one's life which makes a man stand out alone. It is then, ninety-nine times in a hundred, that he is looked upon as a great man.

It is said of Dante, the great Italian poet, that on one occasion he went to see a procession. While he waited in the street he chanced to pick up a book from a stand and commenced to read. He became interested, then completely absorbed, and did not stir until he had finished it. He awoke as from a trance to learn that the procession had passed, yet he had not the slightest knowledge of it.

It is related of a distinguished man, one of the first scholars in America during his time, that when as a youth he was attending college, he was accustomed to spend two hours a day at his Greek lesson. He concluded that this was too much time to devote to it, so he resolved to do the same amount of work in five minutes' less time. He tried it and was

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successful, simply because he concentrated his mind more intently.

From day to day he decreased the duration of study, till he found himself mastering in one hour that which before had required two. After a few months of this practice he could learn his daily lesson in half an hour, a thing that he would have found to be absolutely impossible had he tried it in the beginning. The writer that tells this story said that something more than acquiring the lesson had been accomplished : the student had acquired a different habit of study. He had learned something of the power of concentration.

Your school-days gain for you not only knowledge, but something of far greater importance—the development of mental power. Many times have students asked each other, “What is the use of geometry or algebra ? I shall never require it when I leave school.” If there is anything better than geometry or algebra for exercising the mental faculties, it has yet to be discovered. Both are of infinite value and should never be discarded while at school. Both studies require you to think, to exercise thought, which is almost of the first importance in school life.

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Sir Isaac Newton said near the close of his life, "If I have accomplished anything above the average man, it has been by the power of patient work." Now, it is nothing more than the will force which can aid you in strengthening your concentrative abilities. If you say that you will master a certain lesson and set about it with a calm deliberation, you will find that you can accomplish your purpose much more rapidly, and much more surely, than were you to commence to worry yourself with difficulties.

Then, again, you must have some system about you. A man with a method achieves what, to a slovenly man, seems to be an incredible amount of work. Try to study your lessons at regular hours. Don't glance over a lesson in school one day, on another learn it early in the morning, and then the next day study it at night. Endeavor to find out what time is most favorable for you to study, then do your work at the same hour each day.

I have known people who said they could study better between the hours of eleven and twelve o'clock at night; but it is often said that one hour in the morning is worth two at night, and I think there is much truth in this. When one arises his mind is free, and not tired by the work or study of a whole day.

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A good plan, if you must do your studying at night, is to revise it in the morning. You will be surprised what a help this will be. Never engage in intellectual work immediately after a heavy meal. Nature protests against this, and by producing a sleepy sensation which makes it impossible to study at all, tells you very plainly that you are violating her law. Some must go into a room and have quietness to study, while others care not how much noise their younger brothers or sisters may make.

I knew a man who would sit up straight in a plain, hard chair when he wished to give all his attention to a book. He said if he made himself comfortable he would go to sleep. He would sit perfectly still for an hour or more, and you would have to speak to him several times before he would answer, so deeply would he be wrapt in his reading.

One who has acquired this power does not usually find it necessary to take notes as he reads ; but it is beyond doubt that he who writes down the points to be remembered will know more of the book at the close than an ordinary reader who neglects this little extra labor. The use of the pen or pencil is almost essential in fixing the thoughts in the mind. It would be a good plan, if you desire to have some

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system about you, to take notes from every standard book you read. A man who does this has an incalculable power and a great versatility in speaking and writing on any subject.

I cannot better express this than by quoting the words of an uncle of mine who, in a letter to me, once said : " In all your reading and study carefully note down with pen and ink any word, expression, synonym, epithet, paragraph—in fact, any idea which tickles your fancy, your ideality—especially those of the best authors. You cannot imagine now what a stupendous advantage to you, as the years roll by, this will become. Sir William H. Gregory practised this habit to perfection. He exhibited to me whole volumes, in his own chirography, of extracts from various authors, and I attribute his very happy mode of expressing his ideas to a mentality, highly cultivated by this means."

I may add, had I not availed myself of this advice, these talks would never have been written. Remember the old proverb :

" Despair of nothing you would attain,
Unwearied diligence your point will gain."

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CHAPTER VII.

School-day Reminiscences.



ALMOST think I know the thoughts of the average school-boy during school-days in the summer, when he is caged up inside brick walls, and restlessly poring over old books, while outside are innocent temptations dear to every small boy's heart, "and noises which," as Charles Dudley Warner says, "require instant investigation."

We all know what it is, and have felt the same as you do now, as day after day you go through the monotony of school-day life. It is a monotony, everyone admits, but it is the monotony of a period which in years to come you will look upon as one of the happiest in your existence.

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Gradually, as years grow upon you, your mind will wander back to the old play-ground upon which you quarrelled, played marbles or spun tops. Possibly with one corner of the grounds you will associate some particular game which you often played, and look back to the memory of some companion whom once you loved, but who, a few years later, you heard had passed away.

Some day you will think of those school-days which then seemed so tiresome, and remember them as pleasant hours without a care or trial. The happy days of childhood are never forgotten, associated with them, as there are, memories of the tenderest kind. The old man looks back and recalls the names of school-fellows whose names are fast fading from his memory, and asks sadly, "Where are they?" One there may be with whom he sat at the same desk. They carved their names on the old seat side by side. Where is he now? The question is put in vain. Remember, boys, that the warm attachments of to-day will, some day in the future, when probably you are tottering with age, bring to mind scenes of a thousand pleasures.

Where will you be in twenty, thirty, forty or fifty years? It is impossible to answer; but not so hard

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is it to answer where your thoughts of the past will be if you live those many years. They will be of to-day.

There will be a fascination when, having lived many years from home, possibly in some distant country, you will return to the haunts of your childhood. How much more is this charm increased if these days have been spent in some small village or rural spot !

“ Loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visits paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms displayed—
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, where every spot could please—
How often have I loitered o'er the green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene.”

What a thrill rushes through the aged man as he catches sight of the old homestead in which he first realized that he was in the world, and when he recalls early days when no care crossed his path of happiness ! There is the same old orchard, more rugged than of old ; there is the grove where he fell asleep, listening to the twittering of the swallows in the blue sky far

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overhead, or watching through the swaying leaves the scant white clouds slowly melting away in the air ; there is the same old muddy stream, now almost dry, to which he hurried after school to bathe ; there is the tree, now leafless with age, upon which the robin sang his evening song, and still to-day one of his feathered kind swells his little breast with the same old notes, while perched at sunset upon his lofty eyry. The hand of time has changed the scene, yet carefully the old man looks about him for some object recalling the happy days of youth.

As he wanders down the street the villagers gaze curiously upon him, and he in turn tries to see in some grizzly countenance a companion of his childhood. There stands the old church where every Sunday—how well he remembers it—he used to walk hand in hand with his little brother to service, while his father and mother walked quietly behind. All have gone into that country whence, it is written, no traveller returns, yet the old church still stands to bring back fond memories of long ago.

There also on yon distant hill he sees the old school-house which once he thought a cage, and sighs as pictures of his boyhood rise before him. How well he remembers the village school-master and the

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many pranks he and his companions played on the old man. New faces play about the yard, and the walls ring as of old with the merry laughter of happy life. A new generation has come, and with it the same thoughts of school monotony that once were his.

Such thoughts as these come over him as he turns away. Where are those with whom he romped and played? Sorrowfully he enters the cemetery, but to find many familiar names carved upon their tombs, which, like his memory, have commenced to fade.

Leave the old man standing there among the dead companions of his youth, with the consoling thought that the union of souls still remains; the time is not far distant when he will have communion with those who have run their course.

Now, boys, leave these sad recollections and think of to-day. I was only trying to impress upon you that your present lot is not so hard as you think. Everyone has had to go through the same school life, and wished, especially in the summer, that such a thing as school was unknown. Slowly as the days seem to go by now, the time will come when months will appear to tumble over each other in their haste to get into the past, and your school-days will be but dim recollections.

CHAPTER VIII.

Letter-Writing.



IF there is anything I dislike it is to have to write a letter," is an expression we frequently hear, and I always wonder how many there are, blessed with a good education, who have not the patience to sit down and

write even a very short letter.

These people can hardly realize the great benefits to be derived from letter-writing, but, if they do, it must be considered as unpardonable laziness not to practise it. Of course there are always excuses. "Oh! what time have I to write a letter," someone asks; and another adds, "I don't know what to write about." "I have no one to keep up a corre-

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spondence with me," a third says, and all manner of pleas are put forward to excuse themselves from this happy pastime of letter-writing. The school-boy says, "It is too much like work to have to write a letter," and adds that he "hates writing compositions."

Now, do you remember when you were a youngster, hardly able to see what was on the table without getting on your tiptoes, when your mother would be writing a letter you have said, "I want to wite a yetta, too, mamma"? There was some kind old aunt or uncle to whom you wanted to tell all about the kittens, or how many chickens the old hen had. A trick played on the cat by your older brother might add to your desire to "wite a yetta." It seems to be our nature to tell other people what we know, and this instance of a little child desiring to write a letter illustrates truly that which would be well for us to cultivate.

Boys, too much cannot be said in favor of letter-writing. Choose among your aged relations one who takes an interest in your welfare, and with him or her keep up a regular correspondence. There is much he will tell you which in after years you will remember with the tenderest recollection, and which

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will in time lead you to follow nobler paths in this life. Cherish his letters more than friends, for he will never prove false. He understands you better than your teachers at school; he talks to you in your young days more interestingly sometimes than books, and, if he be all I have known such friends to be, he sends you in each short letter much advice on which volumes have been written, and which is only gained by the experience of many years.

As you emerge from childhood to boyhood, your letters are praised for their increasing neatness, their clearness, and probably the original style which you have of expressing yourself. You take pride in writing to such a friend—a friend who will thus bear with you and gently criticise your mistakes. At the same time, little bits of information and wisdom are given which have their influence upon all your life.

Such letters received by me when I was a boy are still treasured with tender care. I shall have to ask your forgiveness if I quote from them, but I could not impress you more strongly with the advantages to be gained by letter-writing in any other way.

When ten years old I commenced writing to an

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uncle then and still living in Boston. In one of his letters he said: ". . . Just before packing my valise for New York I pinned your letter up in front of my table, so that by no possibility could I forget that I was your debtor. I read your letter with pleasure, for the writing was good and there were but few blots and erasures, and it showed you had taken some trouble in having your letter neat and clean. Any man or woman always takes it as a compliment when a letter received is nicely written.

"But there is one feature which disturbs my equanimity a good deal; that feature is that you put some flourishes of the pen in your handwriting. Let me tell you there is nothing so vulgar or common, and I am sure you will excuse me for telling you this. Did you ever observe a common fellow, with a very slim education, take hold of a pen to sign his name? The first thing he does is to begin flourishing the pen before he puts it to the paper, then makes a terrific flourish about the initial letter, splutters the ink all over the paper, and then blames the pen for all deficiencies.

". . . I am glad to hear you like going to school, and I would remind you that the next five years with you should be the most important years

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in your life. Of course, you will want to have a good deal of money to travel about and see what beautiful places there are on this continent; and if you work hard at your books for the next five years, you will have little trouble in getting money into your pocket, and can buy anything you want almost; whereas, if you spend your time too much in amusing yourself now, you will never be able to get hold of a dollar unless you borrow it, and promise to repay what you know you will never be able to return. . . .

"I hope you will never smoke a pipe or a cigar, or bite the tobacco leaf, nor yet make a dust-hole of your nose by using snuff. If any of these vices get hold of you, you will be held in misery by them with the tenacity that the devil-fish has in its slimy arms."

These are but some of the quotations which might be given, but they will tell you better than I am able the value of having such a correspondent just as you are entering the age of teens. No matter where you may be there is always something to write about, and to describe vividly and accurately what you see is a rare art, but it can be acquired to a great extent by letter-writing. If a person

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does not wish to write ignorantly on a subject research is necessary.

Sir Walter Scott wished to describe correctly some old castles in Scotland to a friend to whom he was writing, and desirous of knowing more of the subject he made inquiries, gaining valuable knowledge all the time, and so wrapt up in his daily rambles did he become that the thought of writing his famous novels occurred to him. Now his name is immortal. The same may be said of Gibbon, who conceived the idea of writing "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire," while wandering through some old Roman ruins.

Much history and geography may be learned by writing letters to friends on scenes which you actually know. Then remember what lasting friendships letters are able to bind together. Think of friends who are separated from each other by oceans for years, yet who carry on a communication which each time brings unbounded pleasure to the recipient. Then again, suppose you have been reading some good books. These are the best things to talk about. Tell what you have read and what you think about them. No way is more profitable to you if you desire to remember what you have been reading.

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There is one thing which you should never forget. When you write a letter do not study over it to use difficult words and intricate phrases. This is a bad fault. Write exactly as you speak every day. Write, as Thackeray says of Addison's writings, "as if he were just going out for a holiday." It is indeed a compliment to be told by your reader that he can imagine he can see you looking at him as he reads your letters. Practise an off-hand, easy style. Be careful to use good English. In short, "talk" to him on paper.

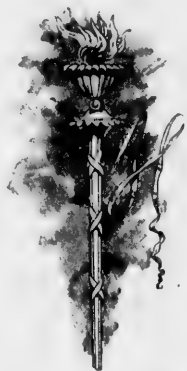
A person wants to read a letter like yourself, that is to say, which reflects your manners and nature. It is very easy for him to go to the library to get somebody else's composition if he wishes to read one. Do not be stiff in your language, but write as you would speak.



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CHAPTER IX.

Time.



OW frequently do we see boys idling on the street corners. It is very probable if we were to ask them what they were doing they would say, "Nothing." "Nothing" in that sense is only another way of saying, "Contemplating mischief."

They certainly are not doing themselves any good, and doubtless they are doing themselves a great deal of harm.

Idleness grows upon one slowly but surely. This reminds me of an essay on "Time," written by Grover Cleveland when only nine years old, while at school. It is worthy of remembrance by boys far older than he was at that time. It is produced here exactly as he wrote it, including the few mistakes in spelling and punctuation :

Time.

"FAYETTEVILLE ACADEMY, Sept. 5th, 1846.

"Time is divided into seconds—minutes, hours, days, weeks, month years and centurys. If we expect to become great and good men and be repected and esteemed by our friends we must improve our time when we are young. George Washington improved his time when he was a boy and he was not sorry when he was at the head of a large army fighting for his country. A great meny of our great men were poor and had but smal means of obtaining an education but by improving their time when they were young and in School they obtained their high standing. Jackson was a poor boy but he was placed in school and by improving his time he found himself a president of the United States guiding and directing a powerful nation. If we wish to become great and useful in the world we must improve our time in school.

"S. G. CLEVELAND."

The letter is simply written, and in it mistakes are seen in spelling, yet who can doubt the fund of thought that this child's essay contains? How strange it is that this boy in his country school should be writing about poor boys before him, who afterwards occupied the same high position of President of the United States. The advice given by this boy was evidently followed by him through life, and now he is a living example of the high standing

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attained by one who "improved his time when young."

When you are standing about the streets in the evening, with a cigarette sticking in your mouth, you imagine you are quite an important personage, but you are only the target for very uncomplimentary thoughts which your appearance suggests to every pure-minded passer-by. It is not only the fact that you draw upon yourself a bad name, but nine times out of ten your companions are idlers as well as yourself. Of course, if you are seen with good-for-nothing fellows, you are classed among them.

It is like the old story of the innocent spaniel caught with the dogs which had killed some sheep, and was shot with them. You may see something in a young man which appears at first repulsive to you, but after a time you tolerate it. Then you look upon it with indifference, until you suddenly find yourself doing the same thing. If, on the other hand, you choose companions who observe the noble aims of life, you will acquire their manly thoughts, and in time rise above the companions with whom you are now so fond of idling.

You think, probably, that after you have been working all day, you have a good excuse to gad

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about the streets, but that is no excuse whatever. Although you may not like to study in the evenings, you never will while idling about the streets; but if you remained at home your chances to improve your time would be far better.

This time ten years you will look back to your wasted hours and wish you had done something to improve them. It is in after life that we commence to see how foolish we have been, when the opportunity to learn something was presented to us and we failed to take advantage of it. No better motto could be given you than that written by the little country school-boy, nine years old, who afterward occupied the highest position in the gift of the people :

“If we wish to become great and useful in the world, we must improve our time in school.”



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CHAPTER X.

Value of a Good Name.



“HOW me a man’s companions and I will tell you what the man is,” is an old proverb which is as true to-day as ever it was. If you were to see a young man, in company with some profane companions, swaggering down the street with his hands thrust deep in his pockets, his hat pulled down over his eyes, and a cigar in his mouth the other end of which nearly touched his hat-brim, what would be your first impression of him? Could you think of him as a model young man? Far from it! A stranger passes by and at a glance he forms his opinion.

Again, let us imagine a young man who does not

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usually associate with such companions, but who perchance at some time is seen in their company. What is thought of him? Simply that he is one of them. A good name may suffer, but whose fault is that but the bearer of it, who is seen among vile associates.

Did you ever think what an immense advantage a man has who bears a good name? Unless a person has, in his actions, shown to the contrary, he will be thought well of, even though he has never done anything in the eyes of the public which is considered great and good.

The value of a good name in a business community cannot be estimated, and is not this one of the greatest steps to success in life? Apart from moral considerations which should lead a man to have an honored name, the young man who aims for success should jealously guard his reputation by shunning those who are loose in their language, indifferent of their companions and polluting in their association. There are many trifling little things as seen in everyday life which boys would do well to observe if they are ambitious of a good or honored reputation. They are to be careful in keeping engagements or promises—be strictly honest and truthful. If a

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man is tardy in keeping an obligation with another, he will be the same in paying a debt. No matter how small a promise may be it should be kept zealously and on the exact time agreed upon.

If a young fellow makes an engagement to call at a certain hour, or be at a certain place at a specified time, he should be there promptly, and not five minutes, or even five seconds late. "Oh! what difference do a few minutes make?" you say. A few minutes may not make any difference, but if you are late at one time you will be more tardy in arriving the next, or in keeping some other engagement, and then you become so indifferent that you will suit yourself, no matter how much you may inconvenience your friend.

In time what a slovenly creature you become! No one can rely upon you. You make promises which you never intend to fulfil, and fastened upon you before you are aware of it is a bad name. Many speak ill of you, and those who do not care to speak behind your back never say anything good of you. Such is all brought upon you by your evil associates. Then, when you are getting on well in life you look back over your wasted opportunities. It is then impossible to correct the errors of youth. No matter how

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influential one's friends may be he makes a failure of life. Probably he has no trade or profession, he is idle and careless, he has had no steady training, he is ignorant of business methods.

Having had vicious comrades in his young days he may now drift into the ranks of the criminal. Life to him has no pleasures. He rapidly sinks away from friends and relatives. He may become a confidence man or a thief, and when he turns grey with crime give up life in some prison or hospital ward, forgotten and unknown. How we should shudder even at the thought of such a fate!

A man died in a hospital, in Baltimore, Md., of whom little was known more than that he had frequented the slums and dives of that city for ten years, drinking when he had the money and doing odd work along the wharves when he wanted a crust of bread. Just before he died it was discovered that he belonged to an old and respected family of New York who were quite wealthy. As a young man, handsome and beloved by all, he had disappeared from home under a cloud of bad habits contracted by evil associations. For ten years they heard nothing of him, but at last they were called to his bedside—he was dying.

Before they reached him he had passed away.

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Such was the end of a high-spirited man who fought in the civil war in one of the most aristocratic of New York regiments, and with distinction. But let us turn away from such sad scenes—would that they were less frequent—and think of the brighter paths of life. All experience tells the same story, and every ambitious boy should take it to heart.

Let me, in closing, again impress you with the danger of evil companions and of the results which flow from careless and idle habits. Do not let your actions bring forth harsh judgments, because from the world's opinion there is no appeal.



CHAPTER XI.

Divers Subjects.



HERE are several things which I want to talk to you about which, in themselves, would not interest you, were I to speak upon them individually at any length. Walking down the street one day I saw a lady drop a small parcel, and immediately a

little ragged newsboy made a grab for it. I, in turn, tried to catch him, but was quite taken aback and made to feel ashamed when I saw he was as anxious as I that she got back the lost article. He politely raised his hat as he returned it to her and received a reward of a few pennies. His little face glowed with honesty as he put the treasured coin in his tattered

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pocket. Yet this was the boy whom I had hastily thought was dishonest. I was too quick in passing judgment upon him, and was, indeed, sorry for it afterwards.

We are all liable to think a person dishonest because his coat may be torn. These newsboys are a sturdy, rugged little lot, and many of them are honest. What they go through in their early days few people have any conception of. Many of those little chaps go home to comfortless beds and know little of kindness.

You may have seen some of them in the large American cities, as I have in the winter, cuddled up over the steam escapes on the pavements waiting to get the papers as the big city dailies were coming off the press. But for all this, beneath tattered clothing beats many a warm little heart. I have seen much of them. No one receives my admiration more than they who treat them kindly.

Don't judge a man by his clothing, nor speak sneeringly about him. It is a cowardly habit which leads many people into trouble. Some are very fond of saying unkind things about people which often do innocent persons a great deal of injury.

Do not tattle and gossip about everything you

Divers Subjects.

may hear. The man that never says anything against any one is soon thought a great deal of. When we hear some one finding fault and making fun of another, we may know that when our back is turned he will say a like thing of us. This is the kind of man that cannot be trusted.

I have known some, as you have, who never spoke disrespectfully of a person behind his back. We cannot help admiring such a person. When you say anything which you do not want repeated, there is always some one about who will tell all about it on the first opportunity. Then you wish you had never spoken as you did.

Avoid speaking ill of any one, no matter what cause you may have, and these regrets will be unnecessary. See everything good in a person, and talk about it as much as you like. Be willing to acknowledge goodness in every one and be charitable toward all.

Speaking of charity and the ragged newsboy, it reminds me of the beggars which infest every large city in the world. I feel just as many of you do—that every time we give anything to them we are deceived, and are only helping impostors and laziness. There is no doubt that this is true in many

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cases, yet there are some worthy of our assistance—one class of beggars in particular, and that is the blind and the cripple.

Because many of the others are frauds we turn our backs upon them even though they be walking upon the stumps of their knees or led about by the hand. It is hardly possible for such a person to be a fraud, and no amount could be given by us which would give him the happiness that we enjoy. It is our custom to refuse all, simply because too frequently we may be imposed upon. Yet, without saying a word about your duty to help all, for fear you may refuse one worthy of your offering, let me remind you of these poor people of whom I have spoken. It is beyond our power, of course, fully to restore them, yet anything we may do goes far to relieve their suffering.

Drop a few cents into the outstretched hand of the next cripple you see, and then mark the light step with which you pass on. One grateful smile from helpless humanity brings more pleasure to him upon whom that smile is bestowed, than all that mere words can convey.

Look upon every one around you, rich or poor, with a more friendly feeling. We are all the same,

Divers Subjects.

and only have one life to live, so we should live it with as much innocent pleasure as possible. How selfish we are if we go through life grumbling at everything and finding fault with everybody!

Some people see how disagreeable they can be. Many boys commence at school and always want to be quarrelling. Boys are the same the world over. At school they squabble and fight among themselves, but they lose a great deal of this when they go out into the world to make their own path.

Did you ever notice the pleasure which some boys at school seemed to take in fighting or jeering somebody else on to fight? Such a boy makes himself very hateful. Of course, there are times when a boy must fight. A boy must defend himself, and if he doesn't he is a coward. But worse than a coward is a "bully." These fellows are always found at school, and nine times out of ten when matched with a boy as large as themselves, they will prove themselves void of even a show of manliness.

How frequently have you seen a new boy at school immediately set upon by these fellows. As long as he appears afraid of them they will taunt him. But let him suddenly turn on the biggest of them and give him a sound thrashing, you will then see the

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new boy admired by every boy in the school, and especially by the chap that received the thrashing. Every boy should have a temper, but unfortunate is he who cannot keep it under control. Many great men on this account have fallen from high positions, while others have been led by their temper into crimes which otherwise never would have been committed. Boys, consider what has been said, and don't throw this book aside and think no more of it.



Do You Smoke?

CHAPTER XII.

Do You Smoke?



WHEN I met you on the street a few days ago, why did you take the cigarette out of your mouth and hide it behind you? I will not say that you wilfully wished to deceive me, but you casually removed it, feeling at the same time that you would rather you were not seen smoking. Now, let us talk this thing over quietly together, and you cannot but say afterward that you agree with me.

You need not turn this page over with a weary feeling at the thought of my preaching to you, as I know "that weary feeling" was brought on most effectually by your first cigarette. Boys, if you don't smoke now, never commence it; if you do, give it up.

What right have I to say this, do you say? Well,

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I will tell you, not merely to impress upon you the practice of economy, but it is on account of your own health that I say stop it. Let thoughts of all the money you would save be made a consideration for second thought ; but think now of your health. You know that you are doing something which, down at the bottom of your heart, you do not want to do, but you have the idea that for the sake of appearances you must.

If some big boy were to take you by the collar of the coat and force you to eat an old tallow candle, you would be very much inclined to resist. You would if you had any manhood about you. Your mother will tell you, if you ask her, that you used to kick with all your baby might, when but a few months old, at the big spoonful of castor oil approached your mouth.

Yet to-day you are puffing and groaning over your first smoke, and making yourself ill from its effects. I fear, my boy, that you had more sense when you were in your swaddling clothes. I have seen you many a time when you did not think I was looking. There you were—choking and spitting, but not doing much smoking. I will frankly confess that, when a boy, I did the same thing.

Do You Smoke?

Well can I remember finding an old cigar-stub on the back street ; then sneaking through the house I got some matches from the lamp table, and went down into an old ditch behind the orchard to have a quiet smoke. Had you been looking on you would have seen the same thing which I described, and more, too ; for soon the tobacco fumes got the best of me, and with pale face I quietly and innocently went into the house to lie down. But I was detected.

An uncle of mine remembers the story, and his strange prescription for me. As I kept very shady, he was determined that I should confess. So he said in my hearing to my mother :

"If he has been smoking, give him a drink of warm water, but if anything else is the matter, give him a heavy dose of castor oil." My anxiety, they say, to confess my guilt was very startling. I have been thankful ever since for this gentle chiding which passed me over the bridge when I hardly knew better. Since that time I have learned to see the uselessness of smoking.

Ask any old smoker what his advice is on this subject. If your father smokes, go and ask him, and the answer will be the same : "Don't smoke ; I wish I had never commenced." You know yourself how

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true this is, now don't you? Whenever you come about your sisters or go into any society, you bring with you a disagreeable odor of stale tobacco smoke on your clothes and hair that makes you smell like a man not particular as to the quantity of liquor he drinks. Then again, you carry about a breath which you have to disinfect before you can kiss your mother.

Smoking does not aid you in your school work, but makes you feel stupid; it makes you nervous and sleepy. Far greater than all, in time it shatters the constitution. I know young men who have told me they were ordered by their doctors to stop smoking if they wanted to live any longer. Yet they would risk all and occasionally smoke.

Tobacco blights a boy's finest powers, wit, muscle, conscience. Nations are legislating against it. Germany, with all her smoke, says, "No tobacco in schools." It spoils boys' brains and makes them too small for soldiers. Knock at the great military institutions of France. "No tobacco" is the response. Try West Point and Annapolis in the United States. "Drop that cigarette" is the word. Indeed, smoking boys are not likely to get as far as that. Major Huston, of the Marine Corps, who is in charge of the Washington Navy Barracks, says that

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one-fifth of all the boys examined are rejected for heart disease, of which ninety-nine cases in one hundred come from cigarettes. His first question is, "Do you smoke?" "No, sir," is the invariable reply. But the record is stamped on the very body of the lad, and out he goes.

Apply for a position in a bank. If you use beer, tobacco or cards, the bank has no use for you. Business life demands fine brains, steady nerves, firm conscience. Watch the boys. See one sixteen years of age; he smokes, probably chews and drinks. Babies of seven and eight are at it. The vice increases. One can pile up statistics by the hour, and give testimony from the highest medical authority, of the misery preparing and already to come.

If you must smoke, wait until nature has made you a strong man of twenty-five. If all did this there would be few who would commence smoking at that age. Think over this, boys, and do not think that smoking makes a man of you, because it does nothing of the kind. If you think that people look upon you with pride when you can stick a cigar in your mouth and strut down the street, you are

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very much mistaken, because they don't, but only laugh at you.

You know you can say nothing in favor of smoking, and you know it does not do you one bit of good, but a great deal of harm. So, don't smoke.



What about Liquor?

CHAPTER XIII.

What about Liquor?



BOYS, this chapter may at first appear to you to be a sermon, but it is not intended as such, for sermons as a rule (without speaking irreverently) make most boys weary, especially on a hot day in summer. I want merely to chat for a few moments in a plain, common-sense way about the evils of liquor.

Don't toss this book away before I have finished what I have to say. Although I have not been chary with advice, you have only once been warned against bad habits, and that was with regard to smoking. Although this vice has been spoken of, I

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have not yet adverted to the evil habit of drinking, which usually accompanies that of smoking.

It seems strange that these vices—for they are vices, and very bad ones—should generally go together. Smoking is not considered by many to be a vice, but at the same time its uselessness and evil results cannot be denied. One may smoke to excess and another may drink immoderately, and the latter is supposed to be the worse vice of the two. But both are bad practices, which, when once they become confirmed habits, render reformation almost impossible.

Why should the one be more objectionable than the other? Smoking generally leads to drinking. I know cases, but very few, where smokers do not drink; but still fewer cases where a man that drank did not smoke. They seem to be sister habits. Smoking creates the thirst for drink. The only way to prevent them from becoming your masters is, never commence. The Roman maxim was, "Resist beginnings."

One rarely meets a boy over twelve years old on the street in Toronto, or any other city, who could tell you truthfully he never smoked one of those nasty cigarettes. Cigarette-smoking is the first step

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to drinking, and who can say that alcohol is not the greatest enemy that this world ever had to combat ?

I remember seeing in New York three well-dressed young men—in fact, they were boys—walking down, or, at least, staggering down the street. Each had one of those vile cigarettes in his mouth. What a lamentable picture they did present. One has hardly any pity for them ; our sympathies are with those at home who will be humiliated and heart-broken over the ruin of their wayward and erring boys. Think of those mothers and of those sisters who see the young fellows stagger home with their cheeks flamed with whiskey. Do we not feel inclined to kick these ungrateful wretches who bring such untold grief into households that before were the abodes of happiness ?

But it is painful to dwell on harrowing scenes, which have been the subject of so many pencils and the theme of so many volumes. Apart from the cloud they bring over their own homes, let me ask these young men if they ever think that their prospects in this world are not affected by their conduct. Do they think for a moment that this is not worth consideration ? I fear some do.

Many a young man says he does not like declining



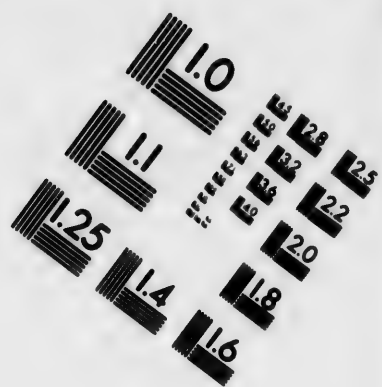
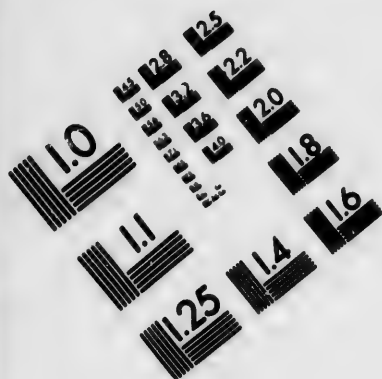
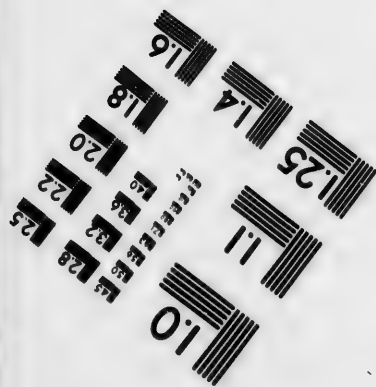
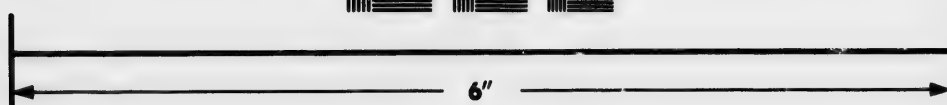
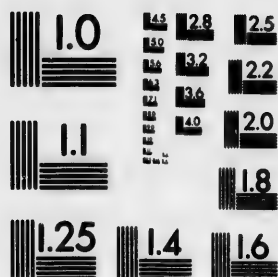


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"a nip," as it is facetiously termed, when invited—in fact, he says he cannot refuse for fear his friends will laugh at him. What rubbish that is! It is no excuse whatever. Listen! Your true friends, those with the most nobility of character, will respect your decisive refusal and think more of you for having the courage to refuse. They will go further and applaud your decisiveness. Others there are who will attempt to undermine your good resolutions with ridicule. They could not employ a more dangerous or effective weapon. Of such fellows beware! They are not your friends, whatever their professions may be, and the sooner you drop such associates the better.

A young man who does not drink nor smoke saves more money during a year than he can really believe. A few dollars during the week on liquor and tobacco means a few hundred dollars during the year. The desire to save money may deter some young men from spending it in a bar-room; but how much more should the conservation of their own health, and of the unalloyed happiness and tranquil contentment of those at home, act as incentives to a sober and well-regulated life.

Boys, let me ask you, especially those of you who

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are as yet unstained, to think over this : have it not hereafter to say, as thousands in thrall of the demon of alcohol are now saying, that they would hail with joy the prospect of a release from their bondage, and that they envy those to whom it is not a temptation.



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CHAPTER XIV.

Do not Scorn Advice.



GIVING advice is one thing, but taking advice is quite another. Boys, you know that frequently, when some one much older than yourself has told you something by way of advice, you have either laughed openly at them, or taken no notice of them whatever. Now, is not that true? Of course it is.

When these letters were appearing weekly I felt that many read carelessly what was written, and thought no more about it, thinking of the writer only as a preacher of some sort, and a very uninteresting one at that. They probably thought he was expecting or requiring too much from them, and, in fact, that he was too particular. This was all furthest from my thoughts, as I want to talk to you as you

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talk to a boy of your own age, in the freest and most common-sense manner possible.

What I have said has been with the intention of helping you, and is given by one who has been "through the mill." How much it may have assisted you I am unable to say, but I want you to finish this little volume without thinking me too fond of hampering all your movements with advice. My object is to help you. Remember, you should always be ready to listen to advice, no matter from whom it may come. If you don't, you will make a sad mistake. The less you are inclined to listen to those who may be mentally your inferiors, the less in time you will be willing to listen to those who are acknowledged to be of superior learning.

There is a saying of Bacon's on reading, which can be appropriately said of listening to advice. He says:

"Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider."

In the same way consider anything I may say, for, by thinking over it, it will teach you to reason for yourself instead of allowing—as so many do—other people to do the reasoning for them. Think for yourself. Don't allow yourself to be reduced to mental

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servitude by accepting, unreservedly, what other people choose to think. I do not wish to infer that you should treat lightly what they may say, but rather that you should not accept everything you hear without some thought. But I would advise you to receive all reasonable advice without thinking over it, sooner than refuse it altogether.

The greatest men that ever lived have been willing to hear a suggestion made by one of the lower ranks of life, because it is often there that genius is found. Some of the greatest thoughts that have stirred the world have sprung from some poor soul whose lot in life has been a hard one. Some of the greatest books ever written have come from the minds of men who, in their way, lived a life of solitude, and whose existence had been marred with the pangs of poverty.

You have undoubtedly noticed in school that the teacher who is willing to listen to the ideas of the scholars, is always more popular than those who are not. It is the same in every-day life. When we utter an idea, and some one listens to us, we like him immediately. If he harshly laughs at us, what are our feelings toward him? They are not angelic, are they?

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How grateful we feel when we offer an idea to some one above us, and instead of treating us with indifference, although he may not agree with what we say, he argues the matter kindly and listens carefully. Now to look at this from another standpoint, what a dislike we have for him who is over fond of giving us advice. He presumes he knows everything. He will listen to nothing we may say, and doubts, just for argument's sake, anything that is said. Place him down at once as a person to be avoided. You may talk to him from morning till night, and you will be no nearer a settlement at the close than you were at the beginning. There are many people of this kind, but shun them as you would a rattlesnake.

Did you ever see a person addicted to this overbearing way of giving advice that had many friends? Certainly not. In these people we find no tender chords of sympathy, and no throb of love beats in unison with them. The more a man knows in this world the more willing he is to acknowledge his own ignorance. Some people may say, but with little effect, that great men become more distant, and more apt to try to crush us with their learning. But David Pryde says of Sir Walter Scott:

"All this fame and knowledge, instead of making

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him haughty and distant, only ripened the innate virtues of his character and made him more sociable, more genial, more grandly simple."

This is a beautiful thought and beautifully expressed, and I would advise you to read this book, "Highways of Literature," by Pryde. It is really excellent, and contains many practical ideas useful to every one.

Don't endeavor to force your advice on those about you. Wait until it is asked, then give it kindly, but not with a spirit to magnify your own importance. Treat every one in this connection as an equal, whether they are socially beneath you or not. You can do so without losing your dignity. As time goes on your memory will be cherished by them.

It is said of many great men that they made it a point all through their lives never to contradict any one, and if some one expressed an opinion, they would either say nothing, or give theirs in a suggestive way, as if seeking for information, and not in a bold, decided "know-everything" manner.

Wise is he who acknowledges his own ignorance and is willing to listen to the advice of others; but foolish is he who trumps up his own knowledge and thinks what he does not know is not worth knowing.

CHAPTER XV.

Self-dependence.



IF there is anything which should be impressed upon you it would be a character of self-dependence—that is, to rely more upon yourself and your own judgment and not have the idea that your opinions are worthless. If a boy trains him-

self in the way of being reliant upon himself his success in life is almost assured.

Do not, however, confuse self-dependence and self-confidence. Of course, a young man must have a good measure of self-confidence, but he can have too much of it; while, on the other hand, he cannot have too much of self-dependence. I will try and show you the difference.

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Many young men, and even older people, are as perfectly destitute of confidence in themselves as a child. Although they are not wanting in the power to do what they undertake they shrink from anything which, in their eyes, presents the slightest difficulties. This is a very unhappy state of affairs. Some people say this is all in one's training.

There is much truth in that. Simply because one has been unknowingly trained to be afraid of everything in the ways of new duties, is no reason why a young man should not have faith in his power to overcome what perhaps are but imaginary difficulties.

I heard of a young man who was a clerk in a bank. The manager, who knew this young man's readiness to say he could do anything, asked him if he could do the duties attending the post above him. "Of course I can," said he. "Come, then, and make the attempt." The young clerk did not hesitate, but went at it, and to his own gratification, as much as to the surprise of the others, he succeeded very well. His success was owing, in part at least, to his self-confidence. But self-confidence in excess is injurious. However, it is a good fault. Self-dependence, on the other hand, can hardly be in excess. The more of it the better.

Self-dependence.

If young men could be thrown upon their own resources, or in other words rendered self-dependent, it would be a great point gained. It is well to see a young man modest and even bashful, yet he should be self-confident to a considerable extent, and self-dependent very largely. Without self-confidence and self-dependence he will hardly make much progress in the world; with all these qualities together he will never fail to go forward. It is a rare thing to find a young man really and truly self-dependent.

He should feel as if he could be and do anything that was ever done by man. It is not expected that he will do all things as well, but we like to see him "going ahead." A young man who has plenty of money is seldom self-dependent. Things have always been done for him. He has never felt want, and has therefore never felt that pleasure of providing for himself the necessities of this life. No matter what he may go into, he will hardly succeed in accomplishing very much, although he may manage to make a living. He has never been taught the first lesson—self-dependence.

This is one of the great evils of riches; not that it spoils the possessor of great wealth, but it unfits his children to look after it or to get on in life. There

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are, of course, exceptions to this. But, on the whole, it seems to be a well-defined principle, that the rich are going down and the poor are coming up, just like an immense wheel of fortune. Some rich people have been known to say, "Would that I had been born poor," while the cry of the poor is just the opposite.

One of the grandest exceptions where one born rich not only held his own, but sent his name down through the ages, is that of Ruskin. John Ruskin, who died some years ago, wrote books which will never let his memory fade. "Modern Painters" is his greatest, and it is, indeed, a beautiful work.

When a man is born rich he is relieved of the duty of self-exertion, self-dependence, and self-"everything else." What does he do in the end? Does he rise higher? He generally sinks. You undoubtedly know families who have been rich and prosperous. The old people die, and the children grow up. They lose their money, they scatter about, die in early life, and are forgotten. Yes, forgotten! They have left nothing behind them to prolong their memory.

What a blessed thing it is to be born in this country, where riches and poverty, rank and caste are not recognized in the pursuits of life. Here

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the road is open to honors, as it is to riches. Every boy born in this country has the same chance to become Prime Minister of Canada, or to become as wealthy as some of our wealthiest men.

Boys, be more self-dependent. Let this quality grow upon you, and do not shrink from doing anything simply because you think it is difficult. The old Roman poet expressed in four words these ideas when he said, "*Possunt quia posse videntur*"—those who think they are able *are* able.



CHAPTER XVI.

Advantages of Knowing a Trade.



NO better illustration could be given you of the necessity of every boy learning a profession or trade than those business depressions which frequently are felt from ocean to ocean in this country. But that you may grasp the meaning, let me ask you who are those who always suffer first? They are the laboring men—the men with no trade. For this reason no boy should be without a trade.

You cannot begin to acquire it too early in life. Among the vast number of vocations there are many which you will like more than others. Select one of these and steadily aim to master it. You will only discourage yourself if you think it is going to take too

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many years to obtain a trade or profession. Many young men do this, and consequently give up that in which they otherwise would make a great success in life. Do not do this. Aim steadily to accomplish your object, and no reasonable power can prevent your attaining it.

Three or four years will enable any bright young man to give himself a trade. Of course a profession may take longer. But what an advantage it must be to a man who has something substantial to follow in life! If he faithfully endeavors to increase his knowledge of the calling he has chosen he in time becomes independent of every one. His services are always in demand. He feels that his employers, if he be employed instead of working for himself, cannot well do without him. Should he wish a change, it is never hard to find some one who desires his services at almost any price.

If you observe, even casually, you will see that the great majority who are out of employment to-day in the large cities of the world are not skilled laborers. They do not excel in any one thing. The very moment times become dull they are the first to be laid off. Their services are most easily dispensed with.

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The great improvements in machinery daily lessen the demand for unskilled labor. What chance has a man with no trade against such odds ? When you have a trade or profession, you can always have it to fall back upon. You never will forget it, and no one can deprive you of your ability of obtaining a livelihood. You will not see the day that skilled labor will be in such slight demand as unskilled labor is to-day.

Do not think you must go to some large city to make a successful start. You can learn much in the country towns, instead of swelling the ranks of those now crowding the city trades. You can commence to learn to be a carpenter, or get an education in any branch of the building business, or contractor's work, just as well in the country. After that you may find your way to the city when you wish to extend your knowledge still further. There is plenty of time to go to the city when you surpass all those in your own town or equal the best of them.

When you commence any business make it a study, and not merely as a means of drawing so much money on Saturday night.

Read all the books and papers on the subject that

Advantages of a Trade.

you can, and talk to older men about it. Day by day endeavor to obtain better results and improvements. Do not make reckless experiments, but reason out processes of perfection. It is the men who continually think of what they are doing that make the successes in life.

What use has the world of a man who does not know some trade, be it ever so humble? He has to depend on others, while frequently a family is dependent on him for subsistence. They may be starving while he is "looking for a job." Of course, it is far better for a boy to place himself in a profession, but every one cannot do this. There is this to be said, that there is no chance for the professions ever to be done away with, as many of the trades are dispensed with to-day, by improved machinery.

Who thought a few years ago that the great newspaper offices, especially in the United States, that employed hundreds of type-setters, would to-day be doing the work by machinery with a tenth part of that number? But such is the case. This, however, is a mere nothing when compared with the immense manufacturing establishments that are always doing away with hand-workers and ordinary laborers.

Do not go into anything in which you cannot see

Snap Shots from Boy Life.

a future. Many young men enter a business without thought of the years to come. They may make a salary sufficient to live on at first, but never take thought that they never can get very much more. It is very easy to look ahead and see what the older men are doing, who probably have spent their lives in the business. You can then see what proportion of men make a success, if there is any success to be made.

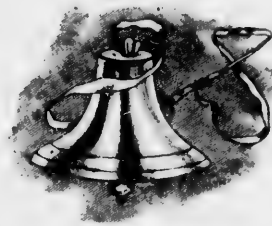
Now, boys, I will say no more on the importance of this subject, but I say again, Choose a profession or trade and stick to it. Study it. It will become a pleasure to you, and even in the most ordinary course of events you will make a great success in life.



Changing Employment.

CHAPTER XVII.

Changing Employment.



OME time ago I heard a young fellow about fifteen years old say that he was going to Chicago to look for some work, as he said things in Canada were too dull for him. The thought came to me at the time, that it was not the place that was too dull for him, but that he was too dull for the place. I may have been wrong, but he said it in a way which made me believe he was another of those young fellows who live in this country, but can never content themselves with it.

The old proverb of "Go west, young man," had evidently been ringing in this particular young man's ears, and like hundreds of others he must obey.

Snap Shots from Boy Life.

From the time Columbus stepped on the shores of America, the rising generation have had their eyes turned toward the setting sun. Now, I do not want to discourage a boy who wishes to go west, but I want to discourage that hankering a boy has to change his skies and go to the United States, with the silly idea that gold is waiting for him on his arrival at his proposed Utopia.

Some boys have gone to work in the country, while others from the country have gone into the cities. There is at this present moment many a young man from the country that wishes he had never allowed himself to be led into leaving his situation there to work in a city. He could live cheaper in the country and save money. That he finds impossible in the city, although he is getting a larger salary. On the other hand, there are many country lads who, if engaged in mercantile pursuits, would be too cramped if they remained in a small town. In a case of this kind, it would be frequently difficult to decide what course to pursue.

Now, about this young man going to Chicago. He inferred that he was going to give up his position in Canada, and rely on finding something to do in the west. I hope he was successful, but it is a sad mistake

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if he thought that it was impossible to make a failure by such a move. One great drawback to the success of young men in the country is, that they are always changing from one thing to another, disregarding the old maxim of "making haste slowly." Do not think that riches will come to you all at once.

But they say they are going to get a bigger salary by changing, and that they will be able to save. This is another mistake, as it is a very well established fact that it is not the men who draw the largest salaries that are the saving men. With many men the more money they make the more they spend. Again, a young man in Canada hears of fabulous salaries paid in the United States, but quite forgets that a big salary in the large cities there will not always go as far as a smaller salary will here. Everything is more expensive in New York or Chicago than in Toronto or Montreal, and this fact should not be forgotten.

Nearly every boy, at some time in his young days, has a desire to leave home and seek employment. These are the promptings of his young and restless spirit incident to his human nature, but it is not always best to allow ourselves to be moved by temporary impulses.

Snap Shots from Boy Life.

Suppose a young man, for instance, has a position in a large city, with a prospect of becoming some day the head of the firm. Every young man, if he has any prospects at all, has this. Now it is downright folly for him to think he can without a doubt get on better elsewhere. What does he do? He leaves his old employers and goes among strangers. He may thereby get a few dollars more, yet he has practically to commence all over ag'in. It will take a long time for his new employers to place the same confidence in him as did the old ones. Young men should not expect too much on the start.

If a young man has faith in his employers, and this he should have before he goes into their office, he should endeavor first to make himself looked upon as faithful and trustworthy. It is then that the reward comes. Many young men, if they cannot jump from one position to another, get discouraged and abandon a reality for a shadow.

I know an instance of a young man who went into a bank, and was never afraid to say he would some day be the president of the institution. His comrades laughed at him, as he did not appear to be particularly bright. However, he remained at his post, and is now general manager of one of the

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largest banks in the world, with a salary of probably \$15,000 a year—and it is a Canadian bank too. The next step will be to the presidency of the institution. And the comrades who laughed at him are very probably still “changing.”

A great deal—in fact, everything—depends on the boy himself when he leaves home. If he has a sturdy character, and can say at the proper time that simple little word “No,” he will succeed. If he allows himself to be easily influenced by others and yields, without reflection, to every passing inclination, it would have been far better for him had he remained tied to his mother’s apron strings. When he is thrown out on the world with nothing but his own resources to rely upon, it will soon become evident what sort of clay he is made of.

On the occasion of his first entrance upon the great stage of life before his countrymen he should remember that first impressions are never obliterated, and are therefore of vast consequence, having often been the foundation of a young man’s fortunes. Look to this and see that the first impressions you give are the best. If you have a good name, cherish it, considering that there are others who bear it besides yourself, and that it was given to you in

Snap Shots from Boy Life.

trust, as it were, of something which it is your sacred duty to keep pure and undefiled.

Young men, think seriously before you leave one good position for another. Do not think that you must leave home to get on in the world. Remember that steadiness will more surely bring you success in life than all these changes which, in your imagination only, would advance your interests.

When I was doing newspaper work in the United States, in the city of Baltimore, Md., a tramp slouched up to me on a corner one day, and asked me for money to buy a cup of coffee. I began talking to him and he said he was from Canada—from St. Catharines. He said he left a good position in Hamilton to get "a job in Baltimore," but he "got to drinking" and lost it. He said he was ashamed now to go home. I asked him his name. He refused to tell me. He was about to turn away, for he was checking great sobs, when I gave him some money, and with a broken "Thank you" he walked away into the night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

City and Country Life.



OME time ago, when these "talks" were first published in weekly instalments, I received a letter from a farmer's son in Maryland. He lived in one of its most beautiful little villages, but appeared very much dissatisfied with everything about him. He had a burning desire to live in some large city. He asked my advice. What I said may be repeated, as many of my juvenile readers in the country have at some time had the same thoughts.

He said: "You have been writing about trades and professions, but as you have never said anything that would apply to me, I thought I would write to you myself, as others have done, hoping you will say something that will help me. I am fifteen years old and am a farmer's son. We have a large farm

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and are fairly well-to-do. I am tired working about home, and want to go to some large city to live. I was down to New York once, and liked it very much. I have a pretty good business education, and want to go into business for myself. What would you advise me to do? I think I can get along better in a city."

"You do, do you? Well, all I can say is, that there are hundreds of young men in this country who think just the same thing, and when they do propose to leave home and live in a city, they have the idea that an easy position, with a good fat salary and little work, is waiting for them. But they are too frequently mistaken. Accustomed only to the simplicity of home-life on the farm, they come into the city, and what they then see there is very apt to give them at first a very wrong impression.

"They observe people fashionably dressed, driving in handsome carriages, moving in and out of superb residences, or strolling up some fashionable avenue, and naturally enough suppose that glittering wealth, ease and comfort is behind all these appearances. Young man, they are not.

"Do not be deluded by the outward show when you visit the city. You only see the surface. What lies underneath is hidden from the world, and it is

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well that it is so, for there often lurk untold miseries in the midst of luxuries. There is a 'skeleton in the closet' where you least expect it. Bickerings, jealousies and crosses that are hard to bear often mar the lives of many people who otherwise are blessed with all that wealth can afford. Money cannot buy true contentment and happiness. The old proverb, 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,' is true in every-day life.

"There is more real enjoyment in your household than in that of many people who are the votaries of fashion, those whose great ambition in life is to outvie their fellowmen in pomp and pageantry. You say you are 'tired of working at home.' The day will come when you will think differently. When you are struggling along out in the world for yourself, in years to come, you will acknowledge then that you did not fully appreciate that pretty country home, which is now undoubtedly yours.

"Now and then some ripple of annoyance may arise amidst your present surroundings; but if that be the reason why you think of leaving home you are to be pitied. What will you do when real trouble comes upon you in waves and billows? You say you are tired of working on a farm?

Snap Shots from Boy Life.

"Well, my young man, remember that you may see the day when you would give a great deal just to be able to go and dig up some potatoes in your fields, weed the strawberry patch, or jump on a horse and go on a message for your mother. You may wish that you could go and feed the stock, or hunt for a lost cow in the woods, for then you would again feel that happy freedom of country life. All these things seem irksome now, but you will think differently some day. But you seem to have set your mind on going to some large city.

"From what you have told me, and judging from your age, you are far better off where you are. It is not surprising that you should feel as you do, for it is no doubt a wise ordination that human nature should be fond of change; but it does not follow that it should be effected without calm deliberation. Do not allow yourself to be blinded by the thought that, as a matter of course, you are going to better yourself by leaving home, or that you cannot fail to advance your interests by doing so.

"There may be circumstances of which you have said nothing, which might affect my advice; but from what you have said, the best thing for a boy your age to do is to stay where he is and to devote

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his spare hours to reading and study. If thus engaged he will never consider the time as lost or misspent, and he will then be better fitted for battling with the world if go he must. You say you want to go into business for yourself. I don't know how a boy of your age can do this very well, and neither do I know what sort of business you would like. If you want to get a clerkship in a city, you can get that with the paltry salary of four or five dollars a week to start on—probably less. You might very likely have to accept anything, unless your business capabilities were greater than those of the ordinary country lad.

“Now, I will let the matter rest with yourself. I do not want to discourage you in your desire to live in a city, for it has many advantages; I only wish you to disabuse your mind of the idea that success is awaiting you the moment you arrive there. Do not underestimate the advantages which you now enjoy. You say you are fairly well provided for, and as you are still very young I can safely advise you to stay at home and get as much schooling as you can for a few years to come. You will then be more settled and more matured in your ideas, and better able to devise plans for the future.”

CHAPTER XIX.

An Inquisitive Nature.



YOU have frequently heard some one say, "Oh! he is a very inquisitive fellow," but did you ever at the moment consider that though he may be very inquisitive, the curiosity to learn is an unmistakable mark of great

mental activity? Although it may never have occurred to you, you may safely predict that in point of education the inquisitive boy will in a very few years be far in advance of the one lacking this disposition. If there is anything which it is well to see in a boy it is this distinctive trait.

Have you ever noticed—but of course you must have at some time or other—a little prattling child put question after question to its parents? And

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have you not heard that parent crossly say, "Oh! don't bother me!" and then seen the little one turn away still following with his eyes the object which attracted it? But how crest-fallen! Thus the earliest attempt to gain knowledge is discouraged, and the little inquirer is so frequently rebuked that at last it cares no more to ask questions. The child is thus educated into one of the most dangerous faults which a boy has to guard in the pursuit of knowledge—that of inattention.

Who can blame the one who is treated in this way from becoming listless and unobservant? The ignorant parent is leading the child into paths which will cause many regrets in after years, when, as a student, he sees that, owing to improper training, he has lost the faculty of attention, and consequently has to exert himself far more than he would have to do otherwise in the acquisition of knowledge. On the other hand, we observe that most men who have been successful in life have had a careful training at home. When they as youngsters first commenced to look about them, every question was answered and every subject to which their imaginative minds were attracted was explained to them in simple speech.

Snap Shots from Boy Life.

Every child is the same. This craving for knowledge is our nature, and instead of being discouraged or restrained it should be stimulated and satisfied. "Tell me a story," lisps the infant as his little eyes open wider with expectant delight. Is it any exertion for him to listen then? No! This should be the same through life.

Let us suppose two boys arriving at the age for commencing school. One goes carelessly to work, taking no interest in it, and having no desire to solve any difficulty. Questions may arise which he does not understand and which he considers unworthy of investigation. What is the consequence? His school-day life is the life of a drone. Of course, he cannot help learning something, but he studies from compulsion only.

Then look at the other little fellow. He goes to school with an inquisitive mind well stored with practical knowledge, but, of course, of a simple kind. He has the love of inquiry and the disposition of wanting to know more. Nothing escapes him. He takes a pleasure in satisfying himself on every point that arises, and his progress is rapid. The boy that asks the most questions is the boy that is promoted at the end of the term. He grasps as much as he

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can as the work progresses, and he never fails to ask for an explanation of what he does not understand, knowing that to acknowledge his ignorance is evidence of wisdom.

Ask your teachers this question, and in every case the answer will be that the more questions you ask the more they are pleased. It shows an interest in the work, which serves to make the hours pass both pleasantly and rapidly. How is your teacher to know what you do and what you do not know? He naturally takes it for granted that you have mastered the subjects of each preceding day. Once you get behind in the work it is hard to recover the lost ground, and consequently you become discouraged.

Boys, let me impress upon you that when you commence a new term you should make it a point from the first hour to master everything that is brought before the class, and do not fail to ask for an explanation of everything you do not understand. Never mind what the others may think. When the time comes for an examination they will wish they had asked questions too. If you pursue this course at school you will continue to do so through life, and in how many of the lives of great men do we find that they possessed this quality of being inquisitive.

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It would be well for you to remember that one great point is to keep up with the lessons. If you do this the interest will never lag, and you will enjoy that great pleasure which takes away the monotony of school life—being fond of study.



The Beauties of Nature.

CHAPTER XX.

The Beauties of Nature.



UCH that has been said in preceding chapters has been devoted to encouraging an ambition — encouraging boys to have a purpose in life above the ordinary desire of men, and with that object ever before them to strive

unceasingly until they have attained it. Such is generally known as success in life, especially if it be accompanied by wealth. The latter is certainly the ambition of most boys at some time in their life.

But let us for a few moments drift away from all such realities, and go together into a different region of thought. Where I shall take you may at first seem strange, but I may stimulate you when I say

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that therein lie beauties where youth and age alike pay homage, and of which no pen has ever written without acknowledging the inability of the human mind to attempt a description. Come! let us revel in lofty thoughts of the beauties in nature, and the grandeur of scenic splendors which daily sweep across the heavens, making an ever-changing canopy of magnificence.

Let us imagine ourselves on some Autumn day, when great white clouds are standing motionless over the dome of the earth, looking upon some mountain range rolling away to the left and to the right, and rising in stately magnificence till its craggy peaks are split horizontally with pale streaks of vapor.

Look yet higher at a still loftier summit, the top of which is lost to the eye by the same motionless sheet which spreads alike over neighboring peaks, making all appear like immense plains raised far above the earth.

To the naked eye such panoramic splendor is incomprehensible. Man stands mute before it—speechless. Thoughts arise which language in its mightiest flights vainly tries to express. No tongue ever touched a human chord which could draw man up to the fullest possible appreciation of such a

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scene as this, and which I fall so far short of properly describing.

It is such reflections as these that draw us away from ourselves and implant higher aims within us. We recognize our own littleness and strive to seek more elevating paths of thought. It is then that we approach the true nobility of man.

As we look upon such a scene as I have described, and look upon the whole without resting our eyes on any particular spot, we exclaim in one voice, "How grand!" Now take a telescope and scan your mountain side, until there we perceive that lonely house, which in the distance appears to cling by some invisible means to its dizzy site. Stretching away on either side the trees form what seems a surface of green velvet, which increases and fades in intensity as a stray cloud floats over far above.

Let us move the telescope idly about, and the green carpet takes the form of trees of almost every kind, from the supple willow to the gnarled oak. Twisting and turning in natural wildness as they jut from ragged cliffs, or from the recess of a displaced boulder, which years before had gone crashing down into the valley below, we see their sturdy or graceful forms standing defiant of the ages. They seem as if

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they had stood there battling the elements from the beginning, and that there they would ever be. Again we pause to murmur with the poet,

“ And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.”

Then again we see, far up on the mountain side, that same lonely home, and we wonder who inhabits such a spot. Our first thoughts are of some poor family who are but barely able to supply the necessities of life. From morning till night they cease not in their work. Once, it might have been, in younger days, they could appreciate scenic beauties, but now all such thoughts are gone. Here, amid untold wealth of nature's unspeakable grandeur, lives poverty.

But let us turn our eyes from this solitary-looking spot to the angry clouds which are tossing about far over to the right. Ah! we think to ourselves we are about to witness a storm in the mountains. Can anything be more thrilling? Can anything liken the elements in their fury as they make war upon nature, and rend and tear earth's green fringes from their roots?

Let us imagine we are standing on some prominent

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peak in the mountains overlooking a great precipice, where all around us stretches naught but seeming emptiness of space, and here let us watch the progress of those clouds which first attracted our attention.

Suddenly a hush falls upon us as the wind dies away, but in a moment a cool breeze fans our face.

Look again in the direction of the storm, how quickly it gathers force! Now the great clouds of different colors far in the distance seem to be changing about like the battalions of a great heavenly army preparing for the charge. Look! You see beneath this changing mass the tops of the trees almost hidden in mist. It forms almost a perfect horizontal line, which makes it appear as if a body of water lies beyond. Above the line you see slowly dissolving and changing clouds fringed with silver, which here and there stand out in bold relief against some heavy cloud of bluish grey.

A few minutes more and the scene is changed. Far over the left the rain descends to earth from a dark cloud, and in the distance it seems as if it were a stone slab with slanting edges rising from the earth. Gradually you see it widening. Now you see it more boldly as a pale-grey sheet forms behind,

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while the sun's rays fall upon it over a distant cloud that is now lined with gold. A few moments more and you see the tops of the trees in the distance turning their leaves over, showing the paler green underneath, and now the increasing wind sweeps on, waving those beneath and then beside you. You feel its balmy breath touch your cheek, and then rapidly it increases and the blast presses on.

Look again where you first saw the storm arise. The horizontal line has vanished, and the great dark clouds have grown light and joined the seeming body of water, leaving no trace of the former division. But above and beyond the scene is almost indescribable. Green and black clouds roll and tumble about, and a blinding flash of lightning, then a roar as of many cannons goes echoing from mountain side to mountain side and dies away far in the distance. A few heavy drops of rain commence to fall, but in a moment they cease.

While you are eagerly watching the elements and anticipating still wilder scenes a change comes over all. Suddenly it grows lighter from the storm quarter, and you know that the furies are weakening at that point. It has circled about as if to make an attack elsewhere, only a part of the storm having

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come over your coigne of vantage. In a moment a strip of blue appears, and rapidly widens till the sun shines out with greater warmth from the blue sky which here and there is spotted with chips and strips of cloud. All are fringed with bright silver, and others lie piled about like solid and gracefully outlined masses of purest whiteness. Almost to the zenith the sky grows clear, while yet a dark cloud hangs over to the left.

Far away in the distance the retreating storm is seen and the muffled thunder is heard. The sun shines once more, the birds sing upon the trees, and a cool, sweet wind gently moves the swaying boughs, and all nature seems to spring forth again and be at peace.



CHAPTER XXI.

Wasted Opportunities of Life.



IN former chapters I have referred in an indefinite way to the "lost opportunities" of this life, or wild-goose chases, but as I never spoke on this subject alone, I may now aid you to understand more clearly what the wasted opportunities really are.

When I was just starting out in the world for myself a friend of mine said to me: "I congratulate you that you are a young man toward the close of the nineteenth century. Were I a young man again to day, in this age of progress, I would do far more in the years to come than I have in the past. Why I have not already done so is only to be accounted for by wasted opportunities."

There are probably few men who could not truth-

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fully say that, had they their life to live over again, they would be far better men. Every generation has had far greater advantages than the one before it. It could profit by the mistakes and blunders committed by its predecessors, and could avail itself of the successes which they attained. But do people do this? If the whole world is considered, they certainly do, as the world is undoubtedly growing better; but, taken individually, those who seek to elevate themselves by studying the lives of great men before them are comparatively very few.

These few are our great men, and these are the men who hand down in their writings to posterity all that is great and good of their times. It is to them that is due the gradual progress and enlightenment of the world. For instance, think of those who, only fifty or even a hundred years ago, were devoted to learning, but lived at a time when the most ordinary books were very expensive. Yet these men by excessive labor have handed down works which will live in the archives of literature forever. Should we not do well to follow in their footsteps?

The majority of my readers are still to be found in the schools. I care not whether you are rich or poor,

Snap Shots from Boy Life.

clever or dull, you have the freshness and vigor of youth. Life is before you, and you look forward to the dawn of manhood full of hope. You can grapple with difficult subjects; you may reach out beyond yourself and fall. Yet what of that now? If you blunder you have time to recover yourself and start anew. You should not want confidence in yourself, but at the same time, instead of thinking or expecting too much of your own abilities, you should not lack discretion. Do not be carried away with the idea that, in grasping for things above you, you cannot fail. You cannot attain success at a bound.

There is one mistake which many young men make, and that is, that they rely on somebody else to give them a start in life, or else they seek the influence of some one to get them a situation; and when they have entered upon their duties, they rest calmly with the thought that the same influence will keep them in the position whether they are suited for it or not. Is it necessary for me to speak against this? I hardly think so. But how often do we see a young man seeking a position by seeking first somebody's aid to help him attain it. This may be all very well in some cases, but nowadays it is met with too frequently.

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It shows that the young man that does this has not confidence in himself, and he afterwards finds he has placed himself under an obligation to somebody else. What a gratification it is to a young man who secures a position on his own merit! He then feels independent of every one.

If a young man fails of his own efforts, then, and not till then, should he seek help elsewhere. Should he obtain it in this way he should never feel secure because he has his friend's "backing," but he should carve his own way and win the esteem of his employers, so that when his friend is dead and gone he has firmly ingratiated himself into the good-will of those with whom he is connected.

Young man, rely upon yourself. Many of you are poor young men. To these I say, do not envy the rich and idle young men who frequent their clubs, men whose bread and butter is already made for them. They have no desire to exert or bother themselves with such subjects. They do not frequent places or move among people where they are likely to learn much that is worth knowing. They think little of the opportunities or possibilities of life. They live for amusement only.

But it is to you, young reader, who have your way

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to make in the world, that I wish to speak. You know that success must be achieved by your own exertions. You must truly appreciate that there is no royal road to learning or to success, but you will only receive the rewards of an honorable career by striving for yourself. Because you are poor it is no reason why you cannot attain success and be loved by your countrymen.

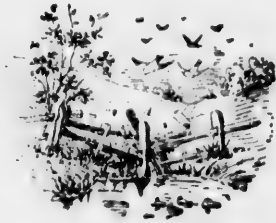
Some say that to be reared without luxury is an advantage. Very many of the high places in this country, as you know, are held by men who were once poor boys. If a young man has good bodily and mental health, good manners, a fair English education, and is honest and industrious, there is no country where he is more certain to attain success than he is in this. If he follows this path nothing will hold him back.

Boys, remember this—and I never told you anything which I more firmly believe—the demand for careful, steady young men who can throw their whole soul into their work is increasing every day. Nowadays one of the essentials required with this character is a young man who can write a legible letter in good English for his chief or manager, and submit it to him for his signature without requiring

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corrections. See that you are ready for such a position when it comes. No matter what your lot may be or what your duties require you to do, see that you do it with all your might.

A gentleman filling a high position in banking circles in the West once said to me: "If I were cleaning boots I would clean them so that friends of my customers would ask them where they got such a good shine." Everything this gentleman does he does with all his might. It becomes a habit in time, and to attempt anything in an easy, slipshod, slovenly manner is very much against your will. Let the old motto be yours, which reads, "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well."



Snap Shots from Boy Life.

CHAPTER XXII.

Brains versus Industry.



YOUNG man once remarked to me in the course of conversation that he wanted to make himself a lawyer, but did not think he had sufficient ability to place himself in that profession. This lack of confidence in one's self is a fault which is too frequently met with. If a young man thinks he can make a success in law, and another in medicine, I say to them : " You have made a good resolution ; live steadfastly up to it ; do not think of difficulties before you, and your life will be a brilliant one."

When you decide upon your profession and express the wish of bettering your position, you have at last got safely over what to many is a serious stumbling-

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block. Many hesitate, and go into one business after another in a half-hearted way, never having a fixed resolve to attain. However, when you have reached a fixed decision, you should keep your resolutions ever before you. You will soon see that in time it becomes easier to be governed by it, until you are so firmly fixed in your purpose that to give it up would cause you a struggle.

It is impossible for me to say what such a young man's chances might be who studies law or medicine, or anything else. That rests with each alone. If he is possessed of the ordinary amount of intelligence, his prospects would be of the best. He may think he has not sufficient brains. This belief is the fault which is too common.

Remember, above all things, that brains without industry are worthless, and that industry without a good head for learning will prove of far more value to you. Time and again we hear people say, "Oh! he is a very clever fellow, and has all the brains of the family." In nearly every case of this kind we find that it is he that has all the industry. Of course, there are exceptions, yet it may be stated as a general rule.

Industry always makes a man, and in the long run

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is ten times more valuable than laziness with brains. Some are certainly more clever than others, yet this way of speaking of every boy who gets on in his studies as being a "brainy boy" is all nonsense. Give the poor boy not quick with learning, but with industry, his due credit. When he learns anything he does not forget it in a hurry, and watch him through life. It is he that makes his mark in the world. If you think that you can make a success in any profession, go ahead, and I do not fear the consequences ; you, I am sure, will never regret it. Be of the opinion that what one man has done before you, you can do, too.

When you commence, don't go half way in your ambition. Say you will some day reach the top of the ladder in whatever profession or trade you may be in, and stick to your resolution. It is said of one of the professors of a Baltimore university of medicine that when a student he failed more than once on a certain subject, and failed miserably. On leaving the school after the examination he picked up a brick, and standing in the street, slammed it against the walls, saying angrily that some day he would be a professor of the university. He is to-day one of the most eminent authorities,

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especially on the subject in which he had failed so badly, and is looked upon as one of the lights of the medical profession.

Do not waste any time thinking over your money prospects. If you can manage to study in your spare hours now and save a little money, you can attend one of our many colleges, and soon will see your way clear. Don't sit down and think over the long time it will take before you graduate. This would be a sad mistake, but it is not an uncommon one.

Many people commence to grumble over some imaginary troubles in the future and magnify their size. What good does that do? It does not do any good, but a great deal of harm. If you want to think about your future, look beyond these little troubles, for they will be little when you reach them, although now they almost take your breath away to think of them. Look ahead of these trifling obstacles, for a time when you will stand before the world a man honored by your countrymen. We all like others to pay homage to us.

Think of the years to come when you will move among great men and be loved by your nation. If you do not aim to place yourself at the top, no one is going to do it for you. Every man who

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succeeded in life fixed his eye on the topmost rung in his ambition and kept it there. If you wish to accomplish anything, do not worry yourself about whether you can or cannot do it. Go ahead and do it, and nine times out of ten you will find it much easier than you expected.

Let me suppose you have been graduated from college, after working with indomitable energy, and have reached a time when fresh difficulties arise. The industry with which you have been carried through so far will surmount all obstacles. If a man has an indefatigable diligence he is bound to come to the front. No reasonable power can hold him back. Whatever you set out to do, do it with that implacable energy which is seen in the life of every successful man.

No matter how small the task may be, do it, and do it as well as you can.



School after the Holidays.

CHAPTER XXIII.

School after the Holidays.



Is there a brighter event in the life of a school-boy than the holidays? We all answer "No!" For months he looks forward to those days with his boyish spirits raised to their highest hopes of pleasure.

School closes and he is free. Week after week the days go by, some enjoying them to their fullest extent in the country, by the sea, or travelling, and unhampered by care or trial, but every wish gratified. Yet there are others in poorer circumstances who must enjoy their vacations as best they can, and many times it is these boys who are the first to look forward with relief to the opening of school.

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Let us imagine that the holidays are nearly over, and soon the schools as of old will be the scenes of childhood's days, accompanied, as they have ever been, with happiness and trouble, with bright hopes and discouragements, with an increased zeal for study and regrets for the long vacation just about to close. Many return to the old playground with downcast heart and feelings of dejection.

Some boys may have been promoted since school closed, and others go back to find that they are to remain where they were before vacation commenced, while many of their old classmates leave them for a higher grade, and younger boys come in from a lower class to take their places. Few boys can bear to see this without feeling that their hopes are cast to the ground, and they in a reckless spirit wish school and all its associations were obliterated, and such a thing as study were unknown.

Then again there are those who will return with their young hearts raised to the seventh heavens with ambitious pleasures, knowing that they are to take their place in a higher grade. They may imagine the work will be harder, yet they realize that if their old classmates are with them it will not be so difficult to get on with the new and more

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advanced studies which their promotion entails. It is needless to say anything to those who are now thinking of school with the most pleasant anticipations.

It is to him who feels that his lot is a hard one and is about to return because he has to, that I wish to offer a word of comfort. Now, my young man, cheer up. Do not think of school as men do of a prison. I wish I could impress upon you that you will never have the happy days of childhood over again. Some day they will be to you but pleasant recollections, and you will remember them as the happiest in your life. Go back to school, no matter in what grade it may be, and make it your aim to place yourself at the head of your class. I have no doubt that on many subjects you know more than some who have gone before you. The only thing you can do now is to strive to place yourself at the top. You can do this if you try.

Let me tell you a plan which, if you put in operation, you will find will help you wonderfully. When you return to school commence from the very first hour and pay strict attention to the lessons, studying them at home, and never let anything be passed over which you do not understand. You will probably say that any one could have told you this, but what

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I want to impress upon you is to study at the beginning. If you commence this you will understand your lessons each day thoroughly, and you know what a pleasure that is as well as I.

If you have studied your lessons you go to school with confidence in yourself, and not afraid to look your teacher in the face for fear he will ask you a question. If you do not know your lesson you feel miserable, and endeavor to say just as little as you can about it. If you commence and keep up with the lesson, it daily becomes a greater pleasure to you, and if you know everything that has gone before, it is far easier to master each successive lesson as you advance. Do not forget this, and then mark what a pleasure studying will become. It is then that you will find study what it should be—a pleasure.

On the other hand, if you allow the days to pass by while you stumble through each day's work you forget much of it and become discouraged. To allow yourself to be in this mood is one of the very worst things that you can do. Each day you look forward to the hour when you will get out of school, and breathe a little more freely when you leave the grounds behind. Then, again, you know that there

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have been times when you knew the lessons perfectly, and you would go home in the afternoon with feelings of pleasure and fresh zeal to study your work for the next day.

In a preceding chapter I have told you that it is well to encourage an inquisitive mind in the pursuit of knowledge. School is the best place possible for this. The boys that ask the most questions get on the best. As I told you once before, it is impossible for a person teaching you to know what you are familiar with and what you are ignorant of. By asking questions it shows that you are taking an interest in your work. This is what all teachers like to see. If you commence to practise this inquisitive nature at school you will never find cause to be sorry for it, because if you have ever noticed it, you will see that every successful student has had this desire to understand thoroughly everything that is brought before him.

Do not sit listlessly at your desk and allow others about you to be acquiring knowledge while you just learn enough to tide you over from week to week. It is a dangerous fault—that of inattention—and in after years this will be impressed upon you with many regrets for your idleness.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Be Happy.



WHAT a pleasure it is to see a happy face and feel the presence of one who is always bubbling over with mirth. And, on the other hand, how very uncomfortable it is to us when some one is continually grumbling, even at the most trifling turn of events. We all know of such people, but how many ever make an effort to imitate the first mentioned?

Many people do not seem to appreciate life at all, treating this world as some sort of a place into which they have been forced against their will, and they revenge themselves by being disagreeable to every one, and have not the intelligence to see how miserable they are making themselves. They know truly that they are miserable, yet they continue making

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others unhappy. Such a profitless, inglorious existence! We influence the lives of those with whom we are brought into daily contact, and should we not endeavor to contribute as far as we can to the happiness of those around us?

Human nature is the same the world over. If you treat your little brother with a kick, a snarl or a cuff, do you think he will not angrily resent it? Is this conducive to kindness? Of course not, and without speaking of how unhappy you are making him, you are a human coward for doing such a thing, as you know he cannot avenge himself. But should one of your own size take the little fellow's part, you cannot be found, and you will only come sneaking around when you hear the dinner bell.

Do not think I am encouraging you to make your own enjoyment the main object through life, because if you seek it selfishly you can never attain it. But in making others happy you find your own existence a pleasant one. My boy, be as cheerful as you can, and your presence will be among your friends as a beautiful spring morning, when the robin's happy song steals over the sunny fields, and the very weeds at your feet seem to breathe a joyful existence.

The world will be to us what we make it for our-

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selves—a place of drudgery or of enjoyment. But to be ever beaming with pleasure is impossible, and to be always cheerful is difficult; yet you can all do much to add to your happy disposition. Many people yield themselves to that melancholy feeling which at times comes upon them. We brood over imaginary regrets and grievances; but this is very selfish, and we should watch over ourselves to prevent it.

See that you try to make life happy, interesting and bright. Do not look at visionary troubles. Frequently they are very trifling. Do not listen to the stealthy whisper of the gossip or take to heart all that you are told has been said against you. Do not be always ready to think some one has slighted you or treated you unkindly. Many times we grieve over things which never happened, or are annoyed at some unkind remark reported to have been uttered, but which was never spoken.

One writer says: "If a man is unhappy, remember that his unhappiness is his own fault, for all men were made to be happy." Another writer says very beautifully: "We cannot but suffer from pain, sickness and anxiety, from the loss, the unkindness, the faults, even the coldness of those we love. How

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many a day has been dampened and darkened by an angry word ! ”

Some people seem to make it their business through life to leave a path of bitterness behind them, and seek only to satisfy any craving which may, for the moment, take possession of them. “Most men,” says La Bruyere, “spend much of their lives in making the rest miserable.” All this seems too true, and does not appear to lack importance no matter how often it may be repeated. Lubbock says: “Mr. Rarey, the great horse-tamer, has told us that he has known an angry word raise the pulse of a horse ten beats a minute. Think, then, how it must affect a child.”

It is needless to tell you how you can make for yourself a cheerful disposition. The day will not pass before you have an opportunity of illustrating it. You may think it will be too much of an effort, but that is nonsense. It will be far less difficult than you imagine, and it will very soon be a pleasure which you will not allow yourself to lose. Try it for a day or so. Think twice before you make an angry retort. Do a kind act, and then see how much happier you feel. Look to higher aims and motives in this life, and do not trouble yourself about the petty ills that too often bring forth a harsh word.

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It is with no false feeling of regret, dear reader, that I have at last reached the closing page of this little book. It would amply repay me for my labor were I to know that, within you, also, such a feeling has been prompted. Yet, there is much which I have said in these few pages, without adding more, which I know you will grant contains much that is worthy your deepest thoughts, and worthy that you accept as a guide to those high paths of wisdom and honor followed by those who have gone before, and of whom the poet Longfellow says so beautifully :

“ Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time.”



The End.

11

Dear reader,
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